

# Desolate Era

## (莽荒纪)

### Book 24

## The Starlord of Fogstone

### I Eat Tomatoes

### (我吃西红柿)

Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller... than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 1: Leaving the Three Realms

An Immortal estate located within the primordial chaos. This estate was a few kilometers in size, and it was filled with creeks, small streams, flowers, and grass.

“Father, will you live here permanently in the future? Won’t you return to the Three Realms?” Brightmoon held onto Ji Ning’s arm as she looked curiously at the area.

“Yes. I plan to enter secluded meditation.” Ning nodded and smiled. “It will be a long time before I return to the Three Realms.”

The lifeblood oath he had sworn was that he would leave the Three Realms within a thousand years of becoming an Elder God. Once this part of the oath became active, his soul would instantly become bound by its power. Even his Primaltwin would be affected. This was why, even though Ning intended to have his Primaltwin stand guard over the Three Realms, it couldn’t actually live within it. It had to reside in a part of the primordial chaos that was right next to the Three Realms.

Only when he finished his lifeblood oath and actually carried Northrest’s final message to Vastheaven Palace would he be released from it.

“Oh. That works as well, I guess. I’ll just spend a lot of time here in the future. This is actually my first time journeying into the primordial chaos.” Brightmoon was rather excited. “Father, I’m going to go take a look at some other places.

“Go ahead.” Ning nodded.

“Young master.” Autumn Leaf and Uncle White had accompanied Brightmoon here. They knew Ning very well...and they knew it made no sense that he had to remain within the primordial chaos while engaging in secluded meditation.

“Ning, son, are you keeping things from us?” Uncle White asked, and Autumn Leaf looked towards Ning as well.

“A few things.” Ning nodded. “There are some things I have to do. During the past period of time, I’ve been slowly working on rebuilding my Primaltwin. Now that its been restored and now that everything has been settled, I have to go take care of things. Don’t worry. My Primaltwin will remain here.”

His true body would keep a spare clone behind as well, safely ensconced within the prisonworld.

As for his Primaltwin’s spare clone, it would be kept safe within the Crescent major world.

During the Endwar, his Primaltwin had self-detonated. It was at the Ancestral Immortal level, and thus an absolutely inconceivable amount of chaos nectar would be needed if he wanted to immediately revive it. His only choice was to slowly rebuild it naturally. Ning had already mastered the Heavenly Dao of Water and had thus gained a certain degree of insight into the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos. He was now capable of absorbing chaos energy and was thus able to constantly absorb a large amount of it, making the rebuilding process fairly quick.

His true body was a dual refiner and would need ten thousand years to rebuild. His Primaltwin was merely a Ki Refiner; only three thousand years was necessary. Thanks to the Heavengazer Tower, Ning was able to easily maintain a rate of time that was twenty times faster than normal. Thus, his Primaltwin had been rebuilt long ago. The only reason he had taken so long was because he had needed to spend a bit more time settling his affairs in the Three Realms.

“Young master...” Autumn Leaf said worriedly, “Let me go with you.”

“No need.” Ning shook his head.

This was no joking matter. Even the mere process of leaving the Three Realms via that spatial vortex would be incredibly dangerous. No one could say what would happen on such a journey. To have Autumn Leaf accompany him into such great danger would be completely pointless.

His Immortal estate in the primordial chaos had already been set up. Ning had invited some friends and family over to tour through it, with the

guest list including the likes of his junior apprentice-brother Mu Northson, his own apprentice Bluecliff Xiaoyu, his senior apprentice-brothers Sun Wukong and Crazy Ji, as well as many other figures. He even invited Lu Dongbin, Kuafu, and other major powers to visit this new home of his as well. Everyone knew that if they wished to meet with Ning in the future, they would have to enter the primordial chaos and visit this Immortal estate.

“Disciple, the primordial chaos is a place where experts are as common as the clouds. Our Three Realms is just a tiny little corner of it. You have to be careful.” Subhuti looked at Ning.

“Don’t worry, master.” Ning nodded.

Today was the day for Ning to set off on his journey. He hadn’t informed anyone of his departure save his master Subhuti.

“When Mother Nuwa left, she never returned. We haven’t heard any word of her at all.” Subhuti said softly, “You have to be careful, careful, careful. If you ever encounter Mother Nuwa, notify me right away.”

“I will.” Ning nodded. His Primaltwin would remain close to the Three Realms within the Immortal estate, and it shared memories with his true body. Whatever his true body experienced, his Primaltwin would also share in.

“Go then.” Subhuti nodded.

Whoosh.

A deep azure flying boat suddenly appeared in midair. Ning boarded the flying boat. A series of spatial ripples spread out around it, and a few moments later the flying boat teleported away through the Void.

“Be careful.” Subhuti watched silently and hopefully as Ning left.

Long, long ago, Mother Nuwa had left the Three Realms. Now, Ji Ning had left the Three Realms as well.

Both of them were the most supreme figures of their times in the Three Realms.

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The azure boat continued to blink through the Void, advancing continuously.

The insides of the flying boat weren't that large. Ning sat in the lotus position, his gaze passing through the walls of the boat and focusing on the primordial chaos outside.

"I'm going to leave the Three Realms and wander through the primordial chaos, all by myself..." Ning shook his head. "A pity that to this very day, I still don't have the power I need to break the chains of the prisonworld."

The prisonworld contained a large number of prisoners within it, including even Elder God and Ancestral Immortal prisoners.

The manacles that held them could only be broken by those who were at the World God or Chaos Immortal level of power. In fact, someone at that level of power could shatter the prisonworld itself. Ji Ning was now extremely powerful, but even when he struck at the manacles with full force using Violetjewel, he was still only able to leave behind a few scratches behind, with the scratches quickly being automatically repaired. Clearly, he was still quite a ways off from being able to sever the manacles.

In truth, if one thought about it in detail, it made sense.

Why did the King of Pangaea arrange for Overseers to watch over the prisonworlds? It was precisely to oversee them and ensure that they would be able to make a report if any World Gods appeared. This meant that even prisoners who ascended to become World Gods would need a fairly long period of time in order to break apart those manacles and the prisonworld. The King of Pangaea would have more than enough time to hasten to the prisonworld! This was the entire point of having an Overseer.

Ning had just barely reached the World God threshold of power. He was able to just barely cause a bit of damage to those manacles now.

“Still...those Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were quite wealthy.” Ning nodded secretly to himself. This flying boat he was on, for example, was a top-grade Chaos treasure that was known as the Godwood Moatship.

The prisoners of the prisonworld, including the wild dog Elder God, had all been beaten and plundered by Ning. Even the incredibly savage wild dog Elder God could just barely be considered a supreme Elder God. Ning didn't even need to use Violetjewel; the 'Heartsword stance' alone was enough to easily defeat all of them.

“If I was able to break apart those manacles, I would gain quite a few retainers.” Ning shook his head, casting those thoughts aside. With another thought, he caused the 3600 Goldstar Beads of the Heavens to appear around him, swirling around him like countless glittering stars.

Ever since he had mastered the Heartsword stance three hundred years ago during the Endwar, he had spent a good deal of his time quietly training and meditating upon it. As a result, Ning had made continuous improvements into his insights regarding the Dao.

He had insights into primordial chaos...

He had insights into space...

He had insights into water and lightning...

He had insights into the sword...

In fact, Ning had even mastered eight of the Nine Chaos Seals. He was at the same level of mastery as Mother Nuwa had been, prior to her becoming a World God.

“The Ninth Chaos Seal...I have the feeling that if I am able to master it, something special will happen.” Ning could sense that the various insights he had gained were building atop each other in a cumulative fashion. Once he fully mastered the ninth chaos seal, all nine of the chaos seals would merge together into a whole, then completely transform. Ning was quite eager to see this happen.

He spent more than half a month flying through the primordial chaos

aboard the Godwood Moatship. Finally, he reached the area which the star map marked as containing the spatial vortex.

“So this is the spatial tunnel?” Ning sat aboard his Moatship, staring in front of him.

An utterly enormous spatial wormhole lay in front of him.

The gigantic vortex tore at the surrounding primordial chaos, causing it to swirl around it in multiple rings. Even Ning felt a sense of pressure and dread.

“The most dangerous vortex of them all.” The alien Outsiders who had been lucky enough to survive passage to the Three Realms had written down extremely detailed records regarding this dangerous vortex.

“It doesn’t matter. I have nowhere else I can go.”

“In we go.”

Ning’s divine power completely filled the Godwood Moatship. In this moment, the Moatship seemed to have transformed into a sword, and Ning commanded it fly in as though he was flying atop a giant sword. Swoosh! After having hesitated briefly before the spatial vortex, the Moatship finally plunged deep inside of it.

Whooooosh.

The vortex was filled with an incomparably powerful tearing force that was instantly applied towards the Moatship, dragging it deeper inside. Ning commanded the Moatship to follow that dragging power inside while doing his best to keep stable and ablate its power.

As a truly supreme Sword Immortal, Ning had reached a truly inconceivable level of finesse when it came to controlling and ablating power.

Whoosh.

Although the ripping power of the spatial vortex was quite terrifying, the Moatship was able to quite easily and safely make its way deeper inside of it. No problems were caused for Ning at all.

“I hope I can safely pass through this spatial vortex and reach the Badlands Territory,” Ning murmured to himself softly. “Given my abilities with the sword, I should be able to stay alive. But if I get lost...all bets are off.”

In front of Ning was an absolutely enormous spatial tunnel that was filled with countless spatial tears, some pitch-black and some ashen-white.

Whoosh!

The Moatship flew forward, making its way through that enormous spatial wormhole.



# Chapter 2: Spacetime Transfer Array

There were three possible outcomes when one flew through this spatial vortex.

The first was that one would be able to safely reach the other side and enter the Badlands Territory. This was the ideal outcome.

The second was that a spatial rift would suddenly appear in front of you and suck you inside, resulting in you being teleported into an unknown territory of the primordial chaos. Ji Ning knew at least a few things about the Badlands Territory, thanks to the detailed star maps which the Three Realms had acquired long ago. The Mindlord which Ning intended to slay also resided in the Badlands Territory. If he ended up in a completely foreign part of the primordial chaos, he would have to slowly figure everything out from scratch. Still, this wasn't the worst case scenario; he'd still be alive, after all.

The third possible outcome was that the spatial rift would teleport him straight into a death trap of some sort.

"I really need to stay away from those spatial rifts."

Swoosh.

The Moatship flew forward at high speed like a sword, agilely dodging and avoiding the suddenly appearing rifts.

Rumble...

An enormous, savage-looking rift of violet light suddenly appeared in front of Ning, instantly covering a very large region.

"Backwards." The Moatship quickly reversed and flew backwards, then curved around the rift and flew away from it.

He had to be able to make up to a thousand corrections every moment. This was an even deadlier process than actually fighting with the sword.

Ning's complete attention was focused on controlling his ship, but he was also able to maintain total control over an area of ten thousand

kilometers around himself. This was the 'Heartsword Realm' which Ning had developed some time ago.

Six days later.

A flying boat suddenly flew out from the mouth of an enormous spatial vortex.

"I made it." Ning's face was rather pale with exhaustion, but he now revealed a look of delight. "I finally made it through safely!"

These six days had been an absolute nightmare.

Those spatial rifts had appeared and disappeared with incredible speed, and some of them were simply enormous. If Ning was just a bit unlucky, it was entirely possible that rifts would simultaneously appear in every direction around him, making it impossible for him to dodge them. When that happened, the only choice would be to take a chance and choose a rift at random.

During the past six days, there was one time when Ning had actually been drawn into a spatial rift. Thankfully, it had quickly dispersed, allowing Ning to just barely escape from it and return to the spatial wormhole. If he hadn't been able to do so...not even Ning himself knew what area he would've been sent to.

But of course, the more powerful a person was, the better his chances would be of successfully passing through the vortex.

Ning had been lucky in that he had only been sucked into a spatial rift once. This naturally meant that it had been fairly easy for him to survive passage.

Godfiend Witherspike, by contrast, had been drawn into rifts on nine different occasions. However, he had been fairly lucky; all nine times, he had been able to fight his way back out of the rifts before being drawn into the other side.

"The Badlands Territory."

Seated within his Moatship, Ning stared at the vast primordial chaos

around him. "Here I am."

Thanks to his star maps, Ning knew exactly where this end of the spatial wormhole lay. Thus, without hesitating at all, Ning immediately began to move towards the spacetime transfer array which was closest to him. The primordial chaos was simply too vast; if he was to slowly fly through it while relying on his own power, even a trillion years wouldn't be enough to finish travelling through every part of the Badlands.

Five months after Ning reached the Badlands Territory.

"There we are." His Moatship flew out from the Void towards an enormous ellipsoid world.

Ning stared at the massive ellipsoid world, then let out a sigh. "This is the ninth chaosworld I've seen thus far. According to my star maps, I'll need to travel past another twenty-six chaosworlds before I'll reach Earthdrake."

The spacetime transfer array which was closest to Ning was centered around the Earthdrake planet. There were so many celestial bodies in the primordial chaos that the vast majority were nameless. Only stars and planets with certain special qualities about them would be given names.

Ning had travelled past one chaosworld after another. Every so often, Ning would sense others scanning him with coresense. Each time, he would send his own dominantly powerful coresense right back at them. When their coresenses 'collided', the other side would be so terrified that they would immediately stop their scrying attempts.

Thanks to his half-step World God body, Ning's coresense was extraordinarily powerful!

After entering the Badlands Territory, there had been one occasion where Ning had encountered an incredibly powerful soul-sweep conducted by a World God. Ning had been so terrified that he had immediately Void-blinked far away, fleeing without a second thought. Although World Gods generally wouldn't act against Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals without a good reason, Ning still felt that it would be better to stay a safe distance away.

One year and nine months after entering the Badlands Territory.

On this day, Ning finally reached the spacetime transfer array located closest to the Three Realms. For him to be able to reach an array after less than two years was actually quite fast; this would be considered an extremely close array.

The primordial chaos was so vast that even in an area like the Badlands Territory, it was common for individuals from backwater chaosworlds to spend up to ten years in order to reach a spacetime transfer array.

“Earthdrake.”

The Moatship hung there in empty space. Ning stayed inside of it, staring at the utterly stunning sight before him.

The primordial chaos in front of him had long ago been torn asunder, revealing eight utterly dazzling stars that glowed with layers of light. These eight stars all revolved around a final planet located in their center. These eight stars were the ‘servants’, while this ninth planet was the ‘master’! These nine celestial bodies came together to form an enormous ‘spacetime transfer array’, and their light was far more dazzling than even the Solar Star of the Three Realms.

In terms of raw size? The formation was probably comparable to the entire Three Realms!

“How could a single formation be so large?” Ning let out a sigh. “I really can’t imagine how powerful the person who set up this formation was.” According to his records, not even World Gods or Chaos Immortals were even close to being powerful enough to construct spacetime transfer arrays. These arrays had all been passed down from the most ancient of days.

As for the question of who built them? No one even asked any longer.

“Go over there.”

Swoosh. The Moatship quickly flew towards the enormous spacetime transfer array.

The core star surrounded by the eight other stars was the Earthdrake planet. Even before landing on Earthdrake, Ning could sense the ripples of power emanating from atop it. These were ripples that emanated from powerful experts.

“Come back.” Ning put away his Moatship, then quickly descended upon the star.

Earthdrake was an enormous planet that was comparable to the Solar Star or the Lunar Star in size. However, the entire planet had been refined and retrofitted, making it more like an utterly enormous magic treasure.

“So many experts...” As Ning sensed the powerful ripples emanating from the star, he immediately transformed into a Ninehorn Lightning Serpent as he flew towards the very center of Earthdrake.

Swish.

The Ninehorn Lightning Serpent was quite fast. While flying forward, Ning encountered quite a few other cultivators. Some looked similar to humans, while some looked extremely different. As they saw the Ninehorn Lightning Serpent fly past them and sensed the undisguised aura of dominating power radiating from Ji Ning, they all revealed looks of wariness on their faces.

Whoosh. Ning landed on the ground, a miniature spacetime transfer array located directly in front of him.

Although spacetime transfer arrays were utterly enormous, their most important cores were just a few hundred kilometers in size. These miniature spacetime transfer arrays actually had buildings located inside of them. Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were stationed in these buildings to keep the array safe. There were also many True Gods and True Immortals here, along with a vast number of Empyrean Gods and Celestial Immortals. All of them were responsible for maintaining the spacetime array and keeping it in good shape for any future uses.

“Where are you going?” An Elder God dressed in golden robes with a scaly reptilian tail was seated in the lotus position in front of Ning. His body was utterly massive, and he peered down as he looked at Ning. When

he sensed how powerful Ning's aura was, his attitude improved slightly and he even put a smile on his face. Earthdrake was primarily populated by Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. World Gods and Chaos Immortal were incredibly exalted figures, after all; they generally wouldn't deign to handle such low-level matters.

"Sevenwater Star," Ning said.

Sevenwater Star was naturally a star that was located at the heart of a different spacetime array.

Actually finding and reaching Vastheaven Palace would be too hard. Ning's first goal was to deal with the Mindlord, who was one of the Nine Divine Generals of God Emperor Blacklotus. The records the Three Realms had regarding God Emperor Blacklotus stated that he was an incredibly powerful World God who had five other World Gods serving him. Together, they dominated a wide swathe of territory.

The area around Sevenwater Star was dominated by God Emperor Blacklotus, the Starlord of Fogstone, Sovereign Eastvictor, and several other hegemons. God Emperor Blacklotus was just one of them.

"Sevenwater Star?" The Elder God nodded. "If you want to go right now, we can activate the transfer array just for you, but that'll cost you a total of 120 bottles of chaos nectar. If you are willing to wait...if you are lucky, in around eight years or so there will be another group activation of the array for transference to Sevenwater Star. Only a single bottle will be required."

"Eight years?" Ning nodded slowly. "Alright."

This spacetime transfer array was the size of the entire Three Realms. Activating it required a significant cost, and a payment of 120 bottles of chaos nectar was quite standard. However, Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals usually wouldn't be willing to act in such a wasteful, extravagant manner. The total networth of most Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals wouldn't even necessarily be that much!

"Yes, eight years." The Elder God nodded. "There's a stone stele over there with detailed information regarding transfers."

“Alright.” Ning walked over to the stone stele, giving it a glance. It was filled with detailed information regarding how long one would have to wait for transference to each other spacetime array.

“If I wanted to go to the Badlands Everworld, I wouldn’t have to wait nearly so long. That destination is a much more frequently visited place,” Ning mused to himself. “Still, there’s nothing for it. I’m simply too far away from Sevenwater Star; if I wanted to fly there by myself, I wouldn’t be able to get there in a trillion years. I might as well wait for eight.” Although Ning had acquired the treasures of the Elder God and Ancestral Immortal prisoners of the prisonworld as well as around 120 bottles of chaos nectar, Ning had left a hundred of those bottles to the Three Realms. He had left them behind for the sake of his daughter and Autumn Leaf.

As for himself? He was strong enough and capable enough to acquire more on his own.

Whoosh.

Ning quickly flew away from this place. He found and selected a beautiful, secluded mountain peak within Earthdrake. He waved his hand, causing an Immortal estate to descend upon the peak. Ning then entered the Immortal estate and began to quietly wait.

# Chapter 3: Fogstone Planet

The Heavengazer Tower of the Heavens had been placed within the Immortal estate.

Ji Ning was seated inside the tower in the lotus position, as still as a lifeless rock. He had activated the ‘solitude’ technique of the [Solitary World God] while using the [Nine Elements Annihilation] to work on the [Starseizing Hand].

The ‘solitude’ technique would allow a cultivator to reach an extremely calm state, with the inner heart becoming far more sensitive and nimble. It was meant to allow one to find the secrets of the body, but it also made it easier for one to visualize and hypothesize certain techniques. Buddha Jueming, who had already sacrificed himself, had perpetually stayed in the ‘solitude’ state, which was why he had been able to come up with a divine ability that was just as strong as Lord Tathagata’s.

Right now...Ning was researching and developing the Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand]!

The first six cycles all served as guides for this project. Previously, when he didn’t have any golden starstone, he had actually used the [Nine Elements Annihilation] to disassemble and overhaul the [Starseizing Hand], allowing him to create a brand new Sixth Cycle. Now, he naturally wished to come up with an even more profound Seventh Cycle!

“A True God body can train in the Sixth Cycle.”

“I already have an Elder God body. Logically speaking, I should be able to train in a Seventh Cycle...but to develop it truly is difficult.” Ning continually visualized and worked on this project but was only able to make a tiny bit of progress.

To train in a Seventh Cycle, one had to first come up with an even more profound way to allow divine power to blast out. In addition, one also needed to come up with a way to transform the palms and make them comparable to Dao weapons. Only then would they be able to withstand the bursts of divine power.



Both of these requirements would be extremely difficult to fulfill.

“Daoist Threelives, as a True God, was able to develop the Sixth Cycle. As an Elder God who has the [Nine Elements Annihilation], I should be completely capable of developing a Seventh Cycle.” Ning was completely absorbed in his meditations.

Thump.

His soul trembled slightly.

The aura of life slowly began to return to Ning’s unmoving, rock-like body. As his aura began to strengthen, color began to return to his skin. Finally, his eyes opened.

“160 years passed in the blink of an eye. It has been eight years in the outside world.” Ning rose to his feet. “Time to head out.”

It was time to journey from Earthdrake to the distant Sevenwater Star.

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“They really know how to make money. A single activation of the formation nets them a hundred bottles of chaos nectar.” Ning shook his head as he walked out of the spacetime transfer array and glanced at the cultivators who were scattering in various directions. “Although each activation of a spacetime transfer array does require a certain amount of resources, they are making at least a 50% profit. They are making money at an insane rate.”

“Every single cultivator has to pay a bottle of chaos nectar each time the array is activated. No wonder only Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals take part.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh to himself.

True Gods and True Immortals simply couldn’t play around like this. The price was too high. True Gods and True Immortals would generally just wander around nearby chaosworlds or follow Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals and servants.

“Any World God or Chaos Immortal would love the chance to take control over a spacetime array like this. A pity that these are all controlled

by the Badlands Court.” Ning sighed. The greatest power in the vast Badlands Territory was the Badlands Court. It was an organization that rivaled Vastheaven Palace in power! In the Badlands Territory, the Badlands Court held supreme, unchecked power.

“Where should I go?” Ning stood in the air above Sevenwater Star, staring into the endless primordial chaos.

“God Emperor Blacklotus established his Blacklotus chaos-kingdom and has five World Gods supporting him. He controls a total of fifty-three chaosworlds.” Ning pondered for a moment on some of the ancient information which the Three Realms had collected in the past. “God Emperor Blacklotus is a local hegemon. He has a few neighbors who he is on poor terms, including the Starlord of Fogstone and Sovereign Eastvictor.”

“The Starlord of Fogstone has eight World-level experts serving him and commands ninety-six chaosworlds.”

“Sovereign Eastvictor has six World-level experts serving him and commands sixty-one chaosworlds.”

“Should I join the Starlord of Fogstone? Or should I join Sovereign Eastvictor?”

Ning was pondering on this question.

He had never entertained the foolish thought of going straight for the Mindlord all by himself. He had to verify whether or not the Mindlord really was Old Man Yuan! In addition, not even World Gods would rashly charge into the headquarters of an enemy force. That was just suicide.

“The Starlord of Fogstone and Sovereign Eastvictor are on hostile terms with God Emperor Blacklotus. If I join one of these two sides, I’ll seek out an opportunity to kill the Mindlord when they engage in battle.”

“I’ll also be able to rely on their power to strengthen myself.”

Vastheaven Palace was too far away!

World God Northrest was an extremely exalted figure, yet had hadn’t

even heard of the Badlands Territory. This meant that the distance between the Vastheaven Territory and the Badlands Territory was so vast that World Gods would almost never travel between these two locales. If Ning remained a mere Elder God, he'd probably die while attempting to find Vastheaven Palace.

It was best if he became a World God first, then embarked on the journey.

He had a full chaos cycle. Just a tenth of a chaos cycle would be more than enough time for him to grow strong.

"The Starlord of Fogstone and Sovereign Eastvictor...the intelligence I acquired about them is all quite old. Perhaps there have been changes within their respective organizations. Mm...Fogstone is closer by, I'll go visit it first. I'll take a good look then make up my mind." Ning immediately commanded his Moatship to begin flying through space in that direction.

Six months later.

The Moatship had arrived before a distant, beautiful planet.

"That's the planet of Fogstone." Ning stared at the beautiful planet. According to his intelligence reports, a total of nine World-level experts resided on this planet, along with thousands of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. From this planet, they ruled over and governed a total of ninety-six chaosworlds.

Swoosh.

Ning quickly flew towards the planet.

More than half of Fogstone was perpetually covered with blurry shadows. Clearly, it was protected by some sort of formation. The other half, however, was not covered by any formations.

"Right there." Ning immediately saw a series of islands within the seas of Fogstone. He immediately flew straight towards it.

Swoosh.

As Ning drew closer to those islands, a figure suddenly flew out from one of them. It was an azure-armored man whose aura was that of a True God's.

"Greetings, senior." The azure-armored man said respectfully, "Senior, this should be your first visit to Fogstone. Do you need me to guide you around?"

"Very well." Ning nodded and smiled. "Are you in charge of welcoming Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals? Do many come to Fogstone?"

"Fogstone rarely has visits from unaffiliated Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals." The azure-armored man smiled. "This junior was ordered to guide the path for any who do come. During the past thousand years, I've only welcomed around a hundred."

"Ah." Ning nodded.

This was in keeping with what Ning knew.

A core planet that was responsible for governing a chaos-kingdom would generally have certain areas that were meant for trade and business. Cultivators needed to purchase treasures, divine abilities, spells, secret arts, golems, and other things. Thus, there was always a need for trading posts. Empyrean Gods, Celestial Immortals, True Gods, and True Immortals rarely had good treasures. Thus, there generally wouldn't be any people responsible for receiving them.

As for the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who served Fogstone, there was no need to guide them around either; they knew the place well enough.

Only first-time visitors like Ji Ning who were at least Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals would merit a guide! If a World God was to arrive, the entire world of Fogstone would be put on high alert. Most likely, a World God of Fogstone would be assigned to welcome and greet such a visitor.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

The two of them descended upon a spacious cloud street.

This street was completely formed from clouds. It led from the vast seas to the various islands.

“Do you need any servants, senior?” The azure-armored man pointed towards a distant, enormous island. “That’s the slave island. Many slaves are imprisoned there, ranging from Celestial Immortals and Empyrean Gods to Ancestral Immortals and Elder Gods! So long as you are willing to pay the price, you can purchase as many slaves as you wish.”

Ning nodded. Imprisoned Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would often be sold off as slaves. Generally speaking, they were enemies who had been captured during conflicts against other organizations.

“I don’t need any for now,” Ning said.

The two walked forward through the cloud path. There were many other cultivators on this path, but almost all of them were below the Elder God level of power. This was why they all hurriedly parted before Ning when they saw him. In this world, the difference in status between the strong and the weak was very obvious.

“This place specializes in selling formations. Yes, that island over there! We also have shops that specialize in selling Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities, secret arts, sword-arts, lightning arts...” The azure-armored man warmly pointed at one island after another.

“Sword-arts?” Ning’s eyes lit up..

“Right.” The azure-armored man said hurriedly, “That island is known as the Sword Pavilion! The Sword Pavilion has many sword-arts within it, at least ten thousand! Some are weak, some are strong. Even the [Skystar Sword] which our Starlord of Fogstone made famous throughout the Badlands Territory is available for sale, so long as you are willing to pay the price.”

“The [Skystar Sword]?” Ning was surprised.

“This is one of the most awe-inspiringly famous sword-arts of the entire Badlands Territory. Once you master it, you might even be able to become a World God through the Dao of the Sword.” The azure-armored man let

out a sigh. “That really would be incredible.”

# Chapter 4: Joining Up

“Oh?” Ji Ning was intrigued.

His own [Nameless] sword-art was something which even World God Northrest of Vastheaven Palace had been mesmerized by. Just by mastering three of its stances, one could become a World God.

This [Skystar Sword], however, needed to be fully mastered in order for one to become a World God. It seemed as though it was quite a bit inferior to the [Nameless] sword-art. Still...Ning knew very well that since the Starlord of Fogstone was willing to sell it, it probably wasn't the best technique he truly possessed. From what Ning had heard, the Starlord of Fogstone was actually quite shockingly powerful.

“Can I ask what the price of purchase would be?” Ning asked.

“Ten cubes of chaos nectar,” the azure-armored man said.

“Ten cubes?” Ning was speechless.

A bottle of chaos nectar contained ninety-nine drops.

A thousand bottles of chaos nectar made up a cube! Ten cubes represented ten thousand bottles!

“There aren't even many World Gods who would be willing to pay such a price. Not just anyone can learn a peerless sword-art that allows you to reach the sixth stage of swordforce.” The azure-armored man smiled.

“When I first arrived at Fogstone, my plan was to purchase a detailed star map of the region around Sevenwater Star,” Ning said.

“Come this way, please.” The azure-armored man knew that most newcomer Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would first wish to get a better idea of the situation in the area. They soon traversed another cloud street and arrived at a quiet island that had a single pavilion atop it.

There were several female Celestial Immortals located inside the pavilion, each of whom was incomparably beautiful. There was also a truly ravishing female True Immortal who headed straight towards Ning.

“Respectful greetings to you, senior.” The female True Immortal smiled. Ji Ning nodded.

“Bring me a star map,” the azure-armored man instructed a female Celestial Immortal.

“Yes.” The female Immortal immediately brought a furled scroll over, respectfully handing it over to the azure-armored man, who then smiled and respectfully handed it over to Ning. “Senior, this star map contains a detailed breakdown of the various powers and regions around Sevenwater Star. It only costs ten chaos gems.”

“Very well.” Ning handed over ten chaos gems.

Chaos gems and chaos nectar were a form of common currency, with chaos nectar having more marvelous properties but coming in smaller amounts. Chaos gems were able to contain more energy within them, with the result being that many powerful formations and golems made use of them as energy sources. Generally speaking, a single chaos gem was considered equivalent to a drop of chaos nectar.

Whoosh. Ning sent his divine energy into the scroll. Instantly, a large amount of information was transmitted to Ning, who memorized it all.

“So not much has changed.” There were very few differences between this intelligence report and the report which the Three Realms had acquired long ago.

God Emperor Blacklotus had increased his territory and now commanded a total of sixty-one chaosworlds.

The Starlord of Fogstone still commanded ninety-six chaosworlds.

Sovereign Eastvictory’s territory had lessened and he now commanded just fifty-eight chaosworlds.

The information in this star map regarding the Badlands Territory was a bit more detailed than the information the Three Realms had, but it was still limited to just this territory. There was no information regarding any other territory, to say nothing of Vastheaven Palace.



“Mm. Judging from this, I should probably join the Starlord of Fogstone for now.” Ning made up his mind. Still, he wasn’t in a rush. He first said to the azure-armored man, “Come, lead me to see a few other places.”

“This way please, senior.” The azure-armored man was quite friendly as he guided the way forward.

After walking about for a long period of time, the azure-armored man began to secretly grumble to himself. “This senior’s been walking around forever, but the only thing he purchased was a single map. This sucks. I ran into a skinflint of an Elder God. I probably did all this work for nothing.”

Anyone who came all the way here via a spacetime transfer array generally did so with a specific purchase in mind, such as buying some of the unique products that belonged to this planet. It cost a bottle of chaos nectar to use the array, after all; anyone who was willing to pay that price to come here would generally be willing to spend even more to buy the desired items. But...this Elder God before him was clearly an exception. All he had purchased was a star map, nothing else.

“And what’s this island? It looks quite impressive.” Ning pointed to an enormous island up ahead.

“That? That island is our mustering grounds.” The azure-armored man was beginning to become a bit casual in his speech. “The Fogstone Dominion commands a total of ninety-six chaosworlds, which means we have many cultivators, quite a few of whom wish to join the Fogstone Army. Ordinary cultivators are naturally not permitted to go into the interior regions of the planet of Fogstone; only this trading region is open for all. Cultivators who wish to join our ranks have to first go to the mustering grounds and be tested before being granted entry.”

“But of course.” The azure-armored man smiled at Ning. “If you wished to join the army, it would be much simpler, senior. As an Elder God, there’s no need for you to be tested.”

He said these words quite casually, but they were true. Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals could be considered powerful experts, and to raise a

new crop of them was very difficult. The Fogstone Dominion controlled many chaosworlds and had many legacies and training techniques to offer its geniuses, but it only had a few thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals within its ranks, despite the passage of countless years. All organizations, including ones that were even more powerful than the Fogstone Dominion, were willing to recruit and retain Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. Frankly speaking, the Fogstone Dominion wasn't that powerful of an organization within the Badlands Territory.

If the azure-armored man was able to recruit an Elder God or Ancestral Immortal into their ranks, his reward would be quite considerable!

"Oh?" Ning nodded. "Let's go take a look."

"Uh, y-you can't just go randomly wandering around the mustering grounds. It is an important place," the azure-armored man said hurriedly.

"Didn't you say...I would be able to join your army?" Ning asked.

"Senior..." The azure-armored man stared. "Senior, are you saying you wish to join the Fogstone Army?"

"Yes." Ning nodded.

"G-g-great!" The azure-armored man was shocked and delighted. He immediately said, "The Fogstone Army is very welcoming towards Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who have journeyed and adventured through the primordial chaos. Although you'll be given certain restrictions, since you are an Elder God the restrictions will be quite lax. The only requirement will be for you to take part in critical battles, while you'll be given many benefits upon signing up. You'll get chaos nectar, treasures, and all sorts of other things."

Ning followed the azure-armored man forward. They passed through more cloud streets as they moved towards the mustering grounds.

"Brother Mu, this is the mustering grounds." A black-armored True God who was leaning relaxedly against a boulder while drinking some wine gave Ning a glance, then snapped at the azure-armored man, "You should lead this senior away from here." Although Ning was an Elder God, he was

still an outsider. The True God soldier really didn't care about him at all.

"You imbecile, this senior is planning to join our Fogstone Army!" The azure-armored man hissed.

"He's joining the Fogstone Army?" The True God's eyes bulged out and he hurriedly jumped to his feet, his attitude markedly more respectful than before. He had acted arrogantly because he was a member of the Fogstone Army and really didn't care about outsiders, but if this Elder God was to truly join the Fogstone Army, he would clearly become one of the core members of it. The Elder God would become one of his superiors, at which point it would be very easy for this Elder God to punish him.

"This way please, senior." The black-armored True God hurriedly spoke with respect.

"Senior, we'll part ways for now." The azure-armored man smiled merrily. He was quite pleased. Today, he had just earned a bundle for himself!

"Alright." Ning immediately followed the black-armored True God forward. As he did, he began to hear cries ringing out from afar.

"How much longer do we have to wait? We have to go through nine rounds of testing, but this is just the third round. This is so pointless."

"If you aren't even patient enough to wait, what makes you think you are qualified to join the Fogstone Army? My senior apprentice-brother told me that last time, the nine elimination rounds took a total of a thousand years."

"Hey, what's going on over there?"

"Why is that white-robed youth being led into the restricted area?"

There were quite a few True Gods and True Immortals waiting in the mustering grounds. They had come from the ninety-six chaosworlds and were taking part in the elimination trials. The nine rounds of eliminations would usually take quite a long period of time, mainly because the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals in charge of the trials were usually quite relaxed and lazy about them. They might end up going into seclusion for a

hundred years between rounds, which was why the trials often ended up taking forever.

“Island master.” The black-robed True God immediately ran over to the side of a gray-robed elder who was fishing in a relaxed manner. “This senior wishes to join our Fogstone Army.”

The gray-robed elder put down his fishing rod, rising to his feet as he looked at Ning.

Ning looked at the gray-robed elder as well. This elder had a closed vertical eye-slit on his forehead; most likely, he was an Elder God as well. The Elder God waved his hand, dismissing the black-armored True God.

“My name is Fushe,” the gray-robed elder said. “The master of this island, the mustering grounds.”

“Darknorth,” Ning said.

“Brother Darknorth, do you truly wish to join our Fogstone Army?” The gray-robed elder asked.

“I do.” Ning nodded.

The gray-robed elder smiled. “Elder Gods do not need to go through the elimination process. They can directly join the Fogstone Army. However... even Elder Gods have different statuses within the army. There’s a great difference between an ordinary Elder God and a supreme Elder God, after all.”

Ning nodded.

“The Elder God soldiers of the Fogstone Army can be promoted based on their military accomplishments; with enough military successes, they will be promoted to very high levels. A second possibility is for them to be promoted based solely on power. If you are strong enough, you can be promoted to a high rank even if you haven’t fought in battle yet.” The gray-robed elder looked at Ning.

“Generally speaking, you have to fight against and defeat certain golems in order to prove your strength. We have three types of golem on this

island; they represent ordinary Elder Gods, elite Elder Gods, and supreme Elder Gods. The golems aren't that skillful, but beating the first golem means you have the power of an ordinary Elder God. Beating the second golem proves that you have the power of an elite Elder God. Beating the third means that you have the power of a supreme Elder God."

"It is quite rare for new entrants to the Fogstone Army to be able to defeat the third golem. I've only encountered two during my tenure here as master of the island," the gray-robed elder said with a smile.

Ning asked, "Just these three types?"

"If you are strong enough, there's no need to even go through the golem testing. You can ask a World-level expert to come here and attest to your power." The gray-robed figure continued, "However, there are very few figures that have transcended even supreme Elder Gods in power. Although the Fogstone Army does have a few such figures, they only became that powerful after spending quite a bit of time improving themselves after joining us. There have been none who have requested a World-level expert come and testify to their power immediately after they join our ranks."

Ning nodded.

He had inherited the legacy of World God Northrest and was quite familiar with some of the unspoken rules of the primordial chaos. He truly did wish to establish himself here on Fogstone and receive the resources he would need in order to grow more powerful! In the future, he would go out and battle on behalf of the Fogstone Army and find a chance to slay the Mindlord. This was why Ning had decided long ago that he would shock them all upon arriving, ensuring that the World Gods of Fogstone all knew his name.

"Please invite a World-level expert to come, then." Ning nodded.

"Invite a World..." The gray-robed figure stuttered. "W-what did you just say?" His mind went blank.

"No need to bother with the three golems," Ning said. "I wish to invite a World-level expert to come here and attest to my strength."

# Chapter 5: Military Headquarters

The gray-robed elder stared blankly at Ji Ning, as though he was staring at some bizarre monstrosity. He then murmured in a low voice, "Brother Darknorth, it's not that I look down upon you, but I would still recommend that you go fight the third golem. That'll be enough! If you are truly powerful, you'll have chances to prove it once you enter the army. But if you insist on asking a World-level expert to verify it...you should know how high the standards of World-level experts are. If you are over-confident in your powers, you can easily cause the World-level expert to feel dissatisfied with you."

"I understand." Ning nodded.

This was no joke. Ning knew exactly how powerful he was. Even an ordinary Elder God who used the 'Heartsword stance' would instantly become comparable to a supreme Elder God! Ning, however, was a half-step World God. When he used the 'Heartsword stance', he could dominate supreme Elder Gods.

If he also used Violetjewel...he would be at the World God threshold of power.

Or, as Godfiend Witherspike had put it...Ning ranked amongst the top three Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals he had ever seen! Not one Elder God in ten thousand would be a match for Ning. The Fogstone Army only had a few thousand Elder Gods and Chaos Immortals. Although they were a fairly elite force, Ning felt confident that he could probably dominate all of them even without using Violetjewel.

"I'll ask you one more time. Are you sure you wish to ask a World-level expert to come and attest to your strength?" The gray-robed elder said solemnly.

"Yes." Ning nodded.

"Alright." The gray-robed elder nodded as well. "Since you've made the request, I'll report it to my superiors! Still...as you can probably guess, most World-level experts spend the majority of their time in seclusion,

while others will often go out adventuring. If a World-level expert is available, he or she will come and test you out. I can't say exactly who it will be or when this will happen. It'll all be up to the World-level experts."

Ning laughed. "Of course. Should I just wait here on the mustering grounds island?"

"No need for that." The gray-robed elder shook his head. "The mustering ground is really for True Gods and True Immortals. How about this? I'll give you a set of silverscale armor on loan. That'll allow you to enter the city alongside me. When the World-level expert comes and tests you out, we'll make a decision on what your actual military rank will be."

"Alright." Ning nodded.

A short while later.

Ning was now dressed in a set of silverscale armor, and he was flying through the air alongside the gray-robed elder.

"The core of the army generally consists of Elder Gods and first-tier Ancestral Immortals," the gray-robed elder said with a laugh. "There are essentially three ranks; silverscale warriors, goldscale warriors, and generals."

"Ordinary Elder Gods and elite Elder Gods are generally silverscale warriors."

"Supreme Elder Gods are generally goldscale warriors."

"As for generals, all of them have transcended supreme Elder Gods in power." The gray-robed elder continued, "Our Fogstone Army has a total of five generals, and they are able to style and color their armors as they see fit. Other soldiers have to wear the assigned armors."

Ning nodded while feeling surprised.

This silverscale armor was a top-grade Protocosmic armor that had protective properties! This was a treasure that was comparable in value to a Chaos treasure because protective armors were extremely rare.

"This armor of yours is merely a suit of top-grade Protocosmic armor.

The goldscale armors are all Chaos armors.” The gray-robed elder chuckled. “Goldscale armors will generally be able to block against most ordinary attacks. In all the Badlands Territory, there are just a few organizations that are willing to give their soldiers such valuable suits of armor.”

Ning nodded.

If someone with a weak divine body who wore a suit of Chaos armor was struck, the shockwave from a sufficiently powerful blow could still cause some damage. By comparison, being capable of reinforcing the body to make it as tough as a treasure was far more useful! Still, these powerful suits of armor were at least able to help ablate 99% of the incoming damage.

“Brother Fushe,” Ning said, “You just told me that the Fogstone Army has five generals. Might I ask how strong they are compared to the Nine Divine Generals of God Emperor Blacklotus?”

“Hmph.” The gray-robed elder smirked. “Those nine aren’t even qualified to be mentioned in the same breath as our generals! They actually came up with their ‘Nine Divine Generals’ because they envied us for having our five. All they did was promote certain supreme Elder Gods with special skills into the ranks of their nine. All nine of them combined are actually a bit weaker than our five.”

Ning nodded.

Indeed. Judging from his fight against Old Man Yuan, Old Man Yuan was probably just an ‘ordinary’ supreme Elder God; his main advantage lay in the fact that he was incredibly skilled in heartforce.

The two continued to fly forward together, chatting the entire time. They quickly arrived at a major continent, and Ning stared at a towering citadel that had appeared in front of him.

“What a large city,” Ning marveled.

The city emanated ripples of absolutely incredible power. Chaos energy swirled around it, so dense as to seem almost solid. The city was furiously



devouring the chaos energy, using it to maintain the enormous formation that protected the entire planet of Fogstone.

“This is Fogstone City.” The gray-robed elder pointed towards the citadel. “The military camps are located inside, as are various entertainment venues. True Gods and True Immortals generally required to reside within the city, while Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals are given more freedom to wander around. They are permitted to choose a residence of their choice on Fogstone and just occasionally go to the army camps to meet with the others.”

Whoosh.

The two slowly began their descent as they flew through the enormous citadel gates of Fogstone City. Ripples of power swept past them but no one came out to bar their path.

“The army camp is over there. The army camp is divided into two major regions. The nicer-looking region is where the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals usually gather together, while the other one is meant for True Gods and True Immortals. Go in and take a look for yourself. I need to make a report on your behalf. I trust that a World-level expert will soon come over to test your strength out,” the gray-robed elder said.

“Go ahead.” Ning smiled at the gray-robed elder, who quickly flew away.

As for Ning, he transformed into a streak of light as he flew towards the entrance of the army camp. There were two black-armored soldiers standing guard at the entrance, but upon seeing the silver-armored youth move towards them they both simply bowed slightly.

Ning entered the army camp.

After doing so, he saw two main paths. These two paths led to two separate drill areas. One area had quite a few soldiers within it, almost all of whom were True Gods or True Immortals. The other drill area had far fewer people, just a few dozen or so Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. The vast majority of them were dressed in silverscale armor, with just one dressed in goldscale armor.

“Eh? Who is this?”

“Anyone know him?”

“Don’t know’m, never seen’m.”

“He should be new.” The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all watched as Ning moved towards them.

The one dressed in goldscale armor rose to his feet. He was rather skinny, and he had some jade-green tattoos around the corners of his eyes. He smiled in quite a radiant manner. “Are you new, my friend?”

“I just joined.” Ning nodded.

“My name is Skyleave.” The goldscale soldier smiled.

“Darknorth,” Ning replied.

“Brother Darknorth, which squad do you belong to?” The goldscale soldier asked curiously.

“I don’t know yet. I just joined. I haven’t really been assigned to anyone,” Ning said. This was true. The island master had to first report Ning’s request to the World God, at which point he would be assigned a rank and a position.

“Haha, I’m the captain of the tenth squad,” Skyleave said. “You might end up assigned to me. All of you, come over here. This new friend of ours is Darknorth, a new member of our Fogstone Army.”

“A new brother? Captain, we have to hold a feast to welcome him.” A rather chubby, smooth-faced soldier dressed in silverscale armor immediately called out.

“Right, Captain!”

“We need to have a feast.”

The others all called out excitedly as well.

“You guys...ugh. Blackpeak is about to attack us, but all you care about is eating and drinking. Fine, fine. We’ll feast, we’ll feast,” Skyleave said with a laugh.

“Ahaha, brother Darknorth, my name is Baiwu.” The chubby silverscale soldier slapped his arm around Ning’s shoulders, then said with a laugh, “Our captain is rarely this generous. He almost never treats us to meals. This is your first time here; you need to taste some of the delicacies of Fogstone as well. Ah, man...I’ve lived for ages but I still as much of a glutton as ever. But the thing is, the better something tastes the more expensive it is. Ugh...”

Ning laughed.

When Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had access to good techniques and tutelage, they would usually either break through to become a World God within a single chaos cycle or never be able to become a World God at all. Most of these soldiers had been alive for quite some time, and none of them had much hope of breaking through. Thus, all of them liked to enjoy life instead. Some liked food while others had other hobbies.

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were all immediately led towards a lavish, semi-translucent building located nearby.

“Three basins of dragon meat first!” Once the soldiers sat down, the chubby Baiwu was the first to call out and make an order.

“You bastards.” The goldscale soldier, Skyleave, just shook his head helplessly.

Soon, all sorts of strange delicacies and dishes began to make their way to the seated soldiers. The most impressive were those three giant basins of dragon meat that were each thirty meters long. The dragon meat was tinged with a dark-red color and emanated an aura of absolute fragrance. Even Ning couldn’t help but drool once he caught a whiff of it. The soldiers all stretched out their hands to grab at the pieces of dragon meat, pulling them out from the basins and chewing on them.

Chomp, chomp, chomp. The Elder Gods chomped through meat and bone alike, enjoying the food and the wine.

# Chapter 6: Elder God Blackpeak

“Is it really that good?” Ji Ning picked up a large chunk of meat that was as thick as his arms, then gave it a bite. A blissful feeling filled his entire body as a surge of pleasure went through him.

“Dragon meat is one of the top ten delicacies of the entire Badlands Territory. There’s no way for dragons to be raised in captivity; they can only survive and thrive in certain special areas...and capturing them isn’t easy.” The goldscale soldier Skyleave laughed. “I usually end up spending more than half of my chaos nectar on food.” For Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, other types of entertainment might be quite cheap, but top-quality food was very hard to find.

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals chatted, drank, and laughed amongst themselves. Ning began to learn more and more about them.

Roughly two hours into their feast...

“SKYLEAVE!”

“SKYLEAVE!”

An enormous roar blasted out like thunder, echoing throughout the surrounding area.

“Eh?” The Elder Gods had been eating and drinking happily, but they now all came to a halt.

“He’s here.” The goldscale soldier rose to his feet.

“The other dishes don’t matter, but make sure you take away the dragon meat. We’ll eat it later.” The soldiers all quickly packed up the dragon meat. They had been eating quite slowly, enjoying every mouthful of it. Clearly, they didn’t want to waste it by gulping it all down too quickly.

“Captain, you don’t even need to bother with Blackpeak.”

“Right. That idiot caused the deaths of more than twenty of our fellow soldiers. So what if you lectured him a bit?”

“Idiot.”

The other soldiers were all cursing the man.

“I said what I said. If he wants to fight, we’ll fight. Does he think I’m afraid of him?” Skyleave laughed coldly. “Let’s go.”

“Let’s go.”

The soldiers all hurriedly followed behind Skyleave.

“What’s going on? Who is this ‘Blackpeak’ you guys are talking about?” Ning followed behind as well while chatting with Elder God Baiwu.

Baiwu pursed his lips. “Blackpeak was once a captain as well...but he was too arrogant and proud. Not too long ago, we had a clash with the Blacklotus Empire. Because of his arrogance, twenty-three of his soldiers paid the ultimate price. Twenty-three Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals! Even the Starlord of Fogstone was notified of this. He was punished by being demoted to be an ordinary silverscale soldier. However, quite a few of the dead Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had friends in the other squads, all of whom were quite angry with Blackpeak. Our captain once cursed him out, causing a bit of friction between the two. They decided to have a duel with each other today.”

“Oh.” Ning nodded.

“Blackpeak is arrogant and prideful, but he is also quite strong.” Baiwu said in a low voice, “The number of captains stronger than him in the Fogstone Army can be counted on one hand.”

As they chatted, their group arrived at the drill area once more. Quite a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had arrived here, all for the sake of watching this battle.

“The tallest one over there? That’s Blackpeak,” Baiwu said.

Ning glanced over. The man was dressed in silverscale armor, but his body was incredibly slender. He had a total of four arms and the parts of his skin that were exposed were all completely pitch-black. He had a pair of cold and narrow golden eyes, and a mocking look could be seen within them. He spoke out and said with a cold smile, “Skyleave. How is it that an imbecile like you would consider yourself qualified to lecture me? Today,

I'll let you know exactly how great the difference in power between us is."

"Cut the crap." Skyleave's face was cold.

"According to the rules of our Fogstone Army..." Blackpeak strode forward, a cold smile on his face. "Duels have to be fought for stakes. How many treasures can you bring out? I'll match any stakes you issue."

"A hundred bottles of chaos nectar," Skyleave said coldly.

"Oho! You are actually willing to risk that much? It must've been hard for you to store up that much chaos nectar. If you insist on giving it all to me, how could I possibly refuse? I accept." Blackpeak licked his lips.

Some of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were here in support of Skyleave. The rest were just here to watch. Blackpeak had come all by himself; clearly, he didn't have many friends.

Soon, the battle began between these two Elder Gods.

"Ahahaha, you really think you are a match for me?" Blackpeak held four great warhammers in his four arms, and they all glittered with earthen yellow light as they smashed downwards like mountains in an utterly dominating fashion. Although there were many who disliked Blackpeak, all had to admit that he was incredibly powerful, even amongst his fellow captains.

"Hmph." Skyleave held a pair of shuttles in his hands as he moved around like a blur. He let out a furious growl, then his body suddenly manifested four more arms, giving him six arms and six shuttles.

"Useless. I won't even have to use any divine abilities against you," Blackpeak bragged loudly.

"Fall down!"

"Fall down!"

"FALL DOWN!"

Blackpeak fought in a crazed fashion as he furiously smashed down with his warhammer, each blow containing utterly shocking amounts of power. Fortunately, this arena was protected by formation spells which ensured

that Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals could fight at full power without any qualms. The Starlord of Fogstone was happy to have his subordinate Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals compete against each other, so long as none of them ended up dying.

Skyleave endured six heavy hammer blows in a row. Finally, upon receiving the seventh hammer, he spat out a mouthful of blood as he was sent flying backwards.

Boom!

Blackpeak instantly chased after him, smashing his warhammer against Skyleave's chest. Although Skyleave was protected by his goldscale armor, the concussive power of the blow was still quite tremendous and enough to instantly and completely shatter his chest. Blackpeak tapped another hammer against Skyleave's head, then smirked. "You lost, you idiot." As he spoke, he stomped down on Skyleave's face with his foot. Boom! Skyleave's face was instantly caved in and reduced to mush.

Whoosh.

A stream of divine power quickly reassembled far off in the distance, reforming Skyleave's body.

"Blackpeak." Skyleave's face was ashen. He had just had his face stomped on so hard that it had been destroyed. How could he not be enraged by this sort of insult?

"Blackpeak, our captain had already lost. You went too far."

"Blackpeak..."

Skyleave's soldiers were all furious.

"In our duels, the only rule is that we are not allowed to kill our opponents. Everything else goes, right?" Blackpeak's face was a mask of innocent confusion. "All I did was cave his chest in and stomp his face in. He's an Elder God! That's not nearly enough to kill him. I didn't break the rules, right? Even if you reported it to Starlord Fogbeast, he'd find me innocent."

“Damn.”

“Damn him.”

All of the soldiers had ugly looks on their faces.

Ning couldn't help but secretly sigh in surprise. When these two had fought, they had controlled their power in an extremely meticulous way, with no wasted energy or movements. Both Blackpeak and Skyleave were more powerful than Lord Demonheart had been.

The chubby Elder God Baiwu had been standing next to Ning. Now, he stepped forward. Everyone fell silent as they all turned to look at Baiwu. Baiwu said in a cold voice, “I'll duel you next.”

“You?” Blackpeak said disdainfully, “You are a silverscale soldier. I can't be bothered.”

“Aren't you a silverscale soldier yourself?” Elder God Baiwu said coldly, “What, do you still take yourself to be a goldscale soldier? If you forget, take a look at the armor you are wearing.”

Blackpeak's face instantly changed. Clearly, Baiwu had just hit him where it hurt. He was an incredibly proud person. Even though he had been demoted, he still felt himself to be a goldscale soldier, an equal of the other captains. Blackpeak stared at Baiwu coldly. “Very well. Since you insist on giving me your treasures, I have no choice but to accept. But if you want to duel me, you need to prepare at least fifty bottles of chaos nectar. Otherwise, don't even bother taking your stakes out.”

“If I lose, I'll give my Ninestar Skyhooks to you.” Elder God Baiwu's body blurred momentarily as he manifested a total of six arms, each of which held onto a curved hook.

“A set of Ninestar Skyhooks? I'll be generous and value that as being worth sixty bottles,” Blackpeak said.

“Good.” Elder God Baiwu looked at him coldly.

“Baiwu...”

“Baiwu, don't do this.”



“Blackpeak is incredibly strong.”

His fellow soldiers quickly began to send mental messages urging him to back down.

Quite a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were watching this happen from afar.

“Blackpeak is quite strong; he was one of the strongest goldscale captains we had. Even Skyleave lost to him. For Baiwu to challenge him is just foolishness.”

“Baiwu is definitely going to lose.”

“Skyleave, you should talk your soldier out of this. It isn’t worth it for him to lose a set of Chaos treasures just like this,” a spectator purposefully called out in a loud voice.

Captain Skyleave was just doing just that. He sent mentally, “Baiwu, I’ll eat my loss and swallow my pride for now. When I become more powerful, I’ll come back and challenge him again. If you go, all you’ll do is lose your treasure. It isn’t worth it.”

But Baiwu completely ignored everyone as he marched straight towards Blackpeak.

Blackpeak smirked.

Boom!

Whoosh!

The two transformed into streaks of light and clashed against each other.

“This Baiwu fellow is really strong!” All of the spectating Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were rather surprised, because Baiwu had just shown himself to possess the power of a supreme Elder God. The two were actually fighting to a standstill.

“Baiwu, you made a breakthrough?” Skyleave revealed a look of surprise and joy.

“Brother Baiwu, kick his face in!”

“Teach him a lesson, brother Baiwu!” Skyleave’s soldiers were all hollering excitedly on his behalf.

The pudgy Elder God Baiwu continuously struck out with his six hooks. No matter how hard the warhammers struck at him, he was able to easily deflect every single attack. His pudgy body was like a ball of meat that continuously rolled everywhere, easily absorbing and deflecting the force of the Blackpeak’s blows.

“Ahahaha...so you actually have a bit of power after all. Pity for you that it won’t make a difference.” The warhammers suddenly vanished from Elder God Blackpeak’s hands, only to be replaced by six slender swords.

Swish!

Both his body and his swords were extremely slender. His movements became ghostly and unpredictable as he launched a furious barrage of blows with his slender swords against Baiwu. Previously, his attacks had been dominating and savage. Now, they were strange and unpredictable. These were two diametrically opposed styles of combat, and this sudden change caused all of the watching Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were quite shocked as Blackpeak quickly seized the upper hand.

Boom!

Baiwu vomited out a mouthful of blood as he was knocked flying by a hard kick.

“He lost.” The soldiers next to Skyleave all shook their head.

“Ugh...”

The spectators all shook their heads as well.

Swish.

Suddenly, a black streak of lightning flashed past, covering Baiwu and quickly moving him away.

“Eh?” Blackpeak had been about to trample over Baiwu, but he immediately came to a halt. Frowning, he stared off into the distance

where a silverscaled youth was holding Baiwu in his arms. A moment later, the youth released Baiwu.

“If he lost, he lost. No need to keep hitting him,” the silverscaled youth said.

“Baiwu, why haven’t you given me your Ninestar Skyhooks yet?” Elder God Blackpeak smirked.

Baiwu gritted his teeth, then waved his arm and sent his six hooks flying over. Elder God Blackpeak accepted them smugly, then began to laugh with delight. He pointed at Skyleave, Baiwu, and the rest of the Elder Gods. “I’ve been pretty pissed lately. Thanks for presenting yourselves before me and letting me beat you up. That really felt good. And you gave me quite a few treasures as well! Ahaha...and just look at the looks in your eyes! Do you want to keep dueling me? I’ll take on any of you. If you want to give me your treasures, I’d hardly refuse.”

Suddenly, a voice rang out. “I want to compete against you.”

Blackpeak glanced over, puzzled. It was the silverscaled youth who was standing next to Baiwu.

“You?” Blackpeak laughed. “What’s going on with the silverscale soldiers? All of them are getting too big for their britches. For yet another one to challenge me...”

“You are a silverscale soldier as well,” the youth said.

Blackpeak’s face instantly turned ugly.

“If the bet is too small, I can’t be bothered,” Blackpeak said coldly.

“If the bet is too big, I’m afraid you won’t dare to accept,” Ning replied.

# Chapter 7: The First Battle

“Won’t dare to accept? A bet with you?” Elder God Blackpeak’s face turned even uglier as rage began to burn within his heart. Ever since he had returned after losing a few Elder Gods, the soldiers of the Fogstone Army had all treated him in a completely different way. In fact, some would actually curse at him to his face or mock him, with Elder God Skyleave being one of them. These insults and this mockery caused him to feel quite unhappy.

He had lived for more than a chaos cycle and had no hope of breaking through to become a World God. For people like him, face mattered more than anything else. In recent days, he had been stewing angrily.

For Skyleave to duel him was one thing.

For a silverscale soldier like Baiwu to challenge him as well? Bah, forget it. He was still a figure with quite the reputation.

But now, a silverscale soldier he had never even met before was also daring to challenge him?

“Yes. A bet with me.” Ji Ning looked at him.

“What’s the bet?” Blackpeak smiled coldly. “No matter how much you bring out, I’ll match it.”

“Three hundred bottles of chaos nectar,” Ning said.

“Three hundred bottles?” Blackpeak blinked, then let out a cold laugh. “Do you even have that much? Take it out.”

Supreme Elder Gods would generally be able to take out a hundred bottles of chaos nectar. If they also added their magic treasures into the mix, they might just barely hit three hundred bottles worth....but how many would generally be willing to add their most important treasures to the stakes of a duel?

Ning waved his hand, causing more than ten thousand chaos gems to appear next to him. “There are 160 sets of chaos gems here.”

In the primordial chaos, chaos gems and chaos nectar were the most commonly used currencies. A single drop of chaos nectar was equivalent to a single chaos gem, with a set of chaos gems being equivalent to ninety-nine gems!

Ning had pillaged all of the Elder Gods of the prisonworld. He had acquired some chaos nectar as well as quite a few chaos gems from them. The total number of chaos gems he had acquired was over 160 sets.

“These two Chaos treasures should be worth at least 140 bottles of chaos nectar.” Ning waved his hand again, causing a pair of Chaos treasures to appear. One was a pair of flying scissors that was shaped like a Flood Dragon, while the other was a set of nine flying needles. These were both quite valuable top-grade Chaos treasures which Ning had acquired.

“So you have some treasures after all.” A cautious look appeared in Blackpeak’s eyes as he looked at Ning. This unremarkable little silverscale soldier appeared to be hiding quite a few secrets.

“Screw’m. I’ve made a few breakthroughs lately, and I daresay none of the supreme Elder Gods of the Fogstone Army are definitively stronger than me now. Only the five generals are definitely more powerful than me and can beat me. What, can this silverscale soldier possibly have the power of a general?” The flames of rage within Blackpeak’s heart began to burn brighter and brighter, and his aura began to increase in might as well.

“Fine. Three hundred bottles of chaos nectar. I’ll take that bet.” Blackpeak waved his hand, causing 240 black jade bottles to appear alongside the Ninestar Skyhooks. A hundred of the bottles had come from Skyleave while the hooks had come from Baiwu. Only the 140 of the bottles really belonged to him. He had actually prepared the chaos nectar for the sake of this duel, but he had all but wiped out his savings in doing so.

If Ning had chosen to wager five hundred bottles, Blackpeak really wouldn’t have been able to provide enough chaos nectar. He probably would’ve been forced to throw his most important treasures into the mix.

A bet of three hundred bottles of chaos nectar...this was quite the wager!

Supreme Elder Gods rarely made wagers of this magnitude. As for ordinary Elder Gods or even elite Elder Gods, most of them wouldn't be able to come up with that much money, even if they pawned everything they had.

"Three hundred bottles?"

"I don't think I've met that silverscale soldier before. Any of you know him?"

"No clue."

"Never met him."

"I don't know him either."

"The Fogstone Army only has so many Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. Where did this guy come from? He probably is quite strong."

"If he dares to make a bet of this size, of course he must be strong enough to back it up...but so what if he's strong? Blackpeak might be an idiot, but he really is powerful. In the past, he's always used warhammers, but just now he switched to using those slender swords. I bet Blackpeak is hiding even more techniques that we don't know about. I'll wager that none of the supreme Elder Gods of the Fogstone Army are definitively stronger than him. Do you really think a silverscale soldier will be able to beat him?"

"Agreed. He's just a silverscale, after all."

The spectating Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all chatted amongst themselves. Clearly, in their eyes there was a limit to how impressive this unremarkable-looking silverscale soldier could be. They refused to believe that someone with the power of a general would be so bored as to pretend to be a silverscale soldier. Even if the man wanted to be low-key, there was no way he would be THAT low-key.

"Don't do it, brother Darknorth."

"Brother Darknorth, this Blackpeak guy is hiding his true power. I

suffered due to it just now!”

“Darknorth...” The soldiers under Elder God Skyleave all hurriedly sent mental messages to him, urging him to stop. They had feasted alongside him just now and were rather friendly towards him. In addition, it could be said that Ji Ning had stood up for them just now. They didn’t wish for Ji Ning to lose his treasures to Blackpeak.

“No need to worry, my friends.” Ning turned his head and smiled towards them.

Skyleave and the others felt helpless. Cultivators at their level wouldn’t be so easily dissuaded!

“Brother Darknorth probably has some certain special techniques that he is confident in...but what he doesn’t realize is that the soldiers of the Fogstone Army all have access to the various legacies and techniques of Fogstone. They won’t have any glaring weaknesses in any areas. It’ll be hard for him to achieve victory using whatever special skills he has. Ugh... he’s too new. There’s too much that he doesn’t know.” Skyleave and the others all shook their heads in worry.

The more powerful a legacy was, the fewer flaws it would have.

Ji Ning, for example. He was skilled in soul defense, heartforce scouting, resistance to illusions, and had powerful protective divine abilities. He was quite formidable in every single aspect, all because of the many techniques included in World God Northrest’s legacy. Dealing with someone like him, who had no glaring weaknesses, would be an incredibly difficult task. Blackpeak was a supreme Elder God of the Fogstone Army; he naturally had learned quite a few formidable techniques of his own as well. The chances of successfully using a special technique to defeat him would be very, very low.

The drill area.

Blackpeak and Ji Ning stared at each other from afar.

“For you to gift me with so much chaos nectar...ahahaha...” Blackpeak held four heavy warhammers in his hands as he boomed out with

laughter, his powerful aura rolling out in waves around him.

As for Ning, he just stood there in a very placid manner, his aura the same as it normally was.

He had been planning to familiarize himself with this army camp first, which was why he had kept his aura in check this entire time. His aura was merely that of an ordinary Elder God's. If he was to allow his true aura of a half-step World God leak out, he probably would've immediately become the focal point of the entire planet. Ning wasn't the flashy, ostentatious type. He preferred to keep a low profile whenever possible... and now an unexpected benefit of that was that he was going to earn some chaos nectar.

He was going to teach Blackpeak a lesson at the same time as he earned some money. Wasn't this just perfect?

"Be careful now. I kicked your captain's face in just a few moments ago," Blackpeak said. As he spoke, he also attacked with his full power, not daring to be negligent.

"Just show me what you have." Ning stood there without moving.

"This silverscale soldier isn't even taking out his weapons? Is he actually planning to use his hands?" Blackpeak mused to himself. It was quite common for experts to use their hands to fight as hands were even more dexterous and nimble than most weapons. One could strike with a palm, a fist, a finger, or a claw. There were also some special body-enhancing techniques that could refine one's hands to make them as powerful as magic treasures.

"Hmph." Blackpeak instantly transformed into a streak of light and shot towards Ning. As he flew over, he lashed out with his giant warhammers, causing the air to shudder as though the heavens themselves had come crashing down to earth.

"FALL!" Blackpeak roared loudly.

"[Starseizing Hand]." Ning immediately struck out with his right hand. His palm was filled with tremendous power, as though it was the gigantic



axe which Pangu had used to cleave Heaven from Earth. It became three hundred meters large as it smashed towards Blackpeak like a gigantic black stormcloud. Ning's hands were comparable to Chaos treasures and were completely capable of withstanding the tremendous amount of divine power which was instantly unleashed by his [Starseizing Hand].

He had the body of a half-step World God. When he allowed his [Starseizing Hand] to burst forth with power, he was overwhelmingly stronger than almost any supreme Elder God.

"FALL!" Blackpeak's words continued to echo in the air, and his eyes were filled with madness as he sent his great warhammer in a vicious blow towards the giant palm. So what if he makes his palm huge? Even if he makes it ten thousand kilometers long, I'll still smash it into meat paste.

BOOM!

The warhammer smashed against the giant palm.

Rumble...

It was like swatting a mosquito. When the giant palm came crashing down, it smashed Blackpeak down to the point of imprinting him into the ground.

Ning withdrew his palm.

Everyone present was silent. All of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals turned to look at Ning.

Blackpeak crawled out of the Blackpeak-shaped impression in the ground, an ugly look on his face. He growled out, "I haven't lost yet!" As soon as they had exchanged blows, he had instantly realized how terrifyingly strong this silverscale soldier was. In a head-on collision, there were very few supreme Elder Gods who would be a match for him...but in a real battle, raw strength alone wasn't worth that much.

Whoosh. The warhammers disappeared from Blackpeak's hands, replaced by those thin swords.

Swish. He transformed into a streak of light and shot towards Ning once more.

“Shameless.”

“You got the crap smashed out of you just now. If he had pressed the attack, you would’ve been finished.”

The spectators all shook their heads, but they didn’t say anything. This was because in a normal duel, the duel would proceed until one side was completely unable to fight back, had his body completely smashed apart, or perhaps had his protective magic treasures knocked far away. Only then would the duel be considered lost. Simply being knocked down didn’t really matter that much. Blackpeak’s body was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure; it wouldn’t be so easily damaged. If he didn’t want to admit defeat, there was nothing that could be said or done about it.

Generally speaking, he would’ve voluntarily admitted defeat for the sake of saving face...but the thing was, Blackpeak still thought he could win!

“He’s just physically strong. I won’t compete against him in strength.” Blackpeak’s four slender swords struck out towards Ning in a ghostly, unpredictable fashion.

# Chapter 8: Chaos Immortal Abyssus

“Go.” Ji Ning once more struck out with his palms. If a supreme Elder God wanted to avoid competing on raw strength, he would have to use some of his true abilities if he still wished to win. As far as raw strength went, even Old Man Yuan’s ‘Blacklotus Guard’ had been beaten by Ning to the point of collapse. This was a testament to Ning’s raw strength. As for technique? Ning hadn’t even used any of his sword-arts yet!

Ning’s palms once more transformed into a pair of giant black stormclouds that covered the skies, but this time the stormclouds moved even faster than before. They moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos, and they carried a strange aura of destruction about them.

[Brightmoon] sword-art, Heavenbreaker stance!

Ning had reached such a high level in sword-arts that his Heavenbreaker stance possessed truly shocking amounts of power. It had become even faster than before, and it also carried a terrifying aura of utterly crushing annihilation that made it difficult for an enemy to dodge.

“How can he be this fast?!” Elder God Blackpeak couldn’t even dodge in time. All he could do was stare wide-eyed as the giant black stormclouds came smashing down towards him once more.

“Damn.” He hurriedly used the four slender swords in his hands to block.

Boom!

Blackpeak staggered backwards but was still able to block the attack in a stable manner. He was skilled in every aspect; furious attacks, strange sword-arts, and defense. The reason why he had been knocked down the first time was because he had overestimated himself and competed against Ning in raw strength. Despite that, he had been able to endure the full brunt of Ning’s attack. Now that he was using four swords to ablate the force of Ning’s strikes, he was able to hold his own.

“This Blackpeak’s defensive powers are actually a bit inferior to Old Man

Yuan's." After this second clash, Ning became certain of his victory.

Old Man Yuan was able to use palm-strikes to set up a completely airtight defense. Ning had to use the 'Heartsword stance' in order to achieve victory.

Blackpeak was more skilled in offensive attacks. Although he did understand certain defensive arts and mysteries, he was still a bit inferior compared to Old Man Yuan.

"Blackpeak is actually losing?"

"Blackpeak is completely focusing on defense. He isn't able to launch any attacks at all. The difference in power between the two is quite obvious."

"This silverscale soldier's palms are able to strike faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. How impressive! He's also incredibly powerful as well. Blackpeak focuses on physical strength, but even he isn't able to withstand the silverscale's blows."

All the watching Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals sighed in amazement. This was too incredible.

"Fall down!" Ning suddenly let out a roar as he manifested three heads and six arms. All six of his arms suddenly stretched out, transforming into six enormous black stormclouds that all moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. He once more used the Heavenbreaker stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art, striking out with incomparable ferocity as his palms smashed down towards Blackpeak.

The six massive palms struck out in a furious, consecutive series of blows that seemed to have no end.

"He's terrifying."

"Who could possibly withstand such a furious barrage of palms?"

"Fast and furious."

All of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, including the ones under Captain Skyleave who had chatted and feasted with Ning, felt a cold chill.

They could tell that almost no supreme Elder God could compete against Ning's palms in raw power. For it to also surpass the limits of the Heavenly Daos in speed...

The six palms continued to furiously rain down upon Blackpeak with tremendous power and great speed. Ning's techniques seemed simple, but all of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals present felt as though they couldn't even breathe. There was no way to defeat this at all.

Sometimes, the simpler something was, the more it could drive someone to despair.

"No."

"Impossible!"

Blackpeak was drowning in palm-shadows. He was only able to withstand the attack for a brief moment before finally falling down. In the end, his defenses simply weren't good enough.

Whoosh.

As soon as he fell down, Ji Ning struck him with a giant palm. His body went completely limp, then Ning seized him and lifted him up.

Ning dispelled the [Three Heads, Six Arms] divine ability, hoisting Blackpeak up with one hand. Blackpeak struggled forcefully with his four arms, but Ji Ning was simply too strong. He was completely unable to break free.

"Give up?" Ning looked at the captured Blackpeak.

"You..." Blackpeak gritted his teeth. Three hundred bottles of chaos nectar!

Ning shook his head. "It seems as though you are going to force me to seal you away and then slowly refine you..." Blackpeak's body was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic treasure. If Ning wanted to actually break his body apart, he would either have to use Violetjewel or seal the man away and slowly refine him to death.

"I admit defeat." Blackpeak lowered his head and spoke these words

with extreme reluctance.

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“What do you think?” Two figures were standing at the very edges of the area. One was the gray-robed elder Fushe, the master of the mustering grounds. The other was a handsome, white-haired, white-robed man. The handsome man was carrying a box on his back as he quietly watched the battle proceed between Ji Ning and Blackpeak.

“He’s quite ferocious.” The white-robed, white-haired man sighed softly. “He must have trained in an extremely formidable divine ability. How else could he be this dominating in raw strength?”

“His palm-arts are quite formidable as well. Every palm-strike surpasses the limits of the Heavenly Daos,” Fushe said.

“Mm.” The white-robed man nodded slowly. “Still, if this is all he has, there’s no need for us to have my master get involved.”

“This might be just part of his true power,” Fushe said. “I have the feeling that he wasn’t lying to me.”

The white-robed man nodded as he continued to watch.

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Ning withdrew his palms, allowing Blackpeak to fall to the ground. Blackpeak rubbed his throat, then gave Ning a hard look. “I’ll remember you.”

“The stakes?” Ning said calmly.

“The stakes!”

“Elder God Blackpeak, hand over the stakes!” Captain Skyleave and the other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all grew excited and ran over to stand next to Ning. Elder God Baiwu excitedly slapped Ning on the shoulders and sighed in amazement, “Impressive. Given how strong you are, why the hell are you wearing silverscale? You should at least have a set of goldscale armor. Blackpeak, don’t just stand there like an idiot. Hurry up and hand over the stakes.”

Blackpeak let out a snort, then waved his hand, causing the 240 bottles of chaos nectar and the Ninestar Skyhooks flew over to Ning. He then turned his head and left, his body blurring as he disappeared into the army camp.

Ning waved his hand, collecting the items.

“Brother Baiwu, here’s your treasure.” Ning handed the Ninestar Skyhooks over to Elder God Baiwu.

“I c-can’t...” Baiwu hurriedly waved in refusal. “I lost it to Blackpeak, while you won it from him.”

“This is something you actually use in battle. You’ve used it for many years; I imagine you must be quite used to it by now,” Ning said.

Baiwu hesitated a moment. This set of treasures had indeed accompanied him for a long period of time, and he was emotionally attached to them. He gritted his teeth, then nodded. “Alright, I’ll accept them back. Brother Darknorth, I owe you one. If there’s anything you need me to do in the future, just let me know.” Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals generally weren’t willing to be in the debt of another; the only reason why Baiwu had accepted the treasures was because he truly had used them for a very long period of time.

“Captain Skyleave.” Ning waved his hand, causing a hundred bottles of chaos nectar to float over towards him.

“No need.” Skyleave laughed and shook his head. “If I lost some chaos nectar, so be it. I won’t go so far as to take it back. No need to even discuss this.”

Accepting the chaos nectar meant accepting a favor from Ning. Baiwu might’ve accepted his treasures back, but he was planning to repay Ning as well.

“Come, come! Darknorth won so much that we really need to feast in celebration. We stopped halfway through the last one. We didn’t even get to finish!”

“Right, right! Let’s go!”

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were all quite happy. To make Blackpeak suffer a loss like this was a happy thing.

“Don’t be in such a rush, everyone.” Two figures walked towards them from afar.

“It is Imperius.”

“Imperius.”

The white-robed, white-haired man and Fushe walked over towards the group.

“Brother Fushe.” Ning smiled.

“This is Imperius.” Fushe made the introductions. “He is the senior disciple of Immortal Abyssus.”

The handsome man known as Imperius was dressed in long robes and carried a box on his back. He smiled and said, “On my master’s orders, I’ve come to invite you to the Abyssus Palace.”

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals nearby were all shocked.

“Hurry up and go!”

“Darknorth, hurry up and go. A Chaos Immortal has summoned you!” They all secretly sent mental messages over to Ning.

Ning felt his heart clench in nervousness as well. One of the nine World-level experts resident on Fogstone was known as Immortal Abyssus. He was a Chaos Immortal who had joined from outside the region. He had been a wanderer of the primordial chaos, but he had decided to take up residence on Fogstone, possibly because he was tired of wandering or for some other reason.

Almost all of Immortal Abyssus’ disciples had originally been his followers who had decided to join him on Fogstone. All of them were outsiders. After taking up residence on Fogstone, he had only accepted a grand total of two disciples over the course of countless years.

“It seems as though Immortal Abyssus will be the one responsible for verifying my strength,” Ning mused. “I’ve heard about the power of World-



level cultivators for so long, but I've never actually met one."

Immortal Abyssus would be the first World God or Chaos Immortal Ning would meet.

"Everyone, I'll head to the Abyssus Palace first." Ning turned to nod towards Skyleave and the others.

"Let's go," Ning said.

Escorted by Island Master Fushe and Ancestral Immortal Imperius, Ning departed from the army camp. The citadel was quite large, and the nine World-level cultivators all resided in their own palaces.

"That's Abyssus Palace over there." Imperius pointed towards a distant, towering palace that was almost completely black in color. The palace emanated golden ripples of power in every direction, with the ripples being so strong as to cause even Ning to feel secretly shocked.

"Abyssus Palace is a Dao treasure." Imperius laughed. "When we followed Master in adventuring through the primordial chaos, we went to countless dangerous areas. In many cases, we had to rely on the Abyssus Palace to survive."

Ning nodded.

There was a guard at the entrance of Abyssus Palace. Upon seeing Imperius, Fushe, and Ning fly towards him, he stepped aside and didn't try to stop them.

The insides of the palace were quite spacious. Beautiful women belonging to many different races could be seen everywhere, as well as valuable beasts and birds. There were also springs of water that emanated auras of intoxicating spirituality; clearly, these were extraordinary holy springs.

"Master is in the main hall." Imperius pointed towards the front, then smiled. "After he learned of your presence, he was quite curious about you."

"Eldest apprentice-brother, eldest apprentice-brother!" A lively young

maiden dressed in gauze came running out. When Ning saw her, he was secretly puzzled. She was merely a True Immortal! For a True Immortal to become apprenticed to Immortal Abyssus was no easy feat.

“What is it, junior apprentice-sister?” Imperius asked.

“World God Blackmist has arrived.” The maiden hurriedly lowered her voice and whispered, “He’s right there inside the hall. Master is accompanying him.”

Ning’s heart thumped.

World God Blackmist?

Of the nine World-level experts on Fogstone, three were World Gods. World God Blackmist was one of them.

“Oh?” A thoughtful look seemed to flash past Imperius’ eyes as he grinned at Ning. “It seems you’ve attracted quite a bit of attention, brother Darknorth. Come, let us have you pay your respects to Master and World God Blackmist.”

“Right.”

Ji Ning, Elder God Imperius, and Island Master Fushe walked towards the gates of the hall together.

# Chapter 9: Sword-Arts

After entering the main hall, Ji Ning felt as though he had entered a completely different world. He had heard nothing when he was outside the hall, but upon entering it he could clearly hear the sound of music reverberating throughout it.

Ning swept the hall with his gaze.

There were female Immortals dancing within the hall, as well as musicians who were playing all sorts of various instruments. There were nine separate musical groups spread throughout the hall, each separated by curtains of brocade cloth. There had to be several hundred musicians present as well as several hundred dancing female Immortals. All of them merely fluttered about at the margins, providing just a bit of extra festivity.

“Greetings to you, senior Blackmist,” Ancestral Immortal Imperius said respectfully. “Master, I’ve brought Elder God Darknorth.”

Ning glanced upwards. There were two tables placed at the front of the great hall. On the left sat a white-haired elder dressed in loose white robes, while on the right sat a black-haired man who looked rather sloppy and poorly dressed. Both of them emanated ripples of power that were so great, they felt as though they were the ripples that would emanate from entire chaosworlds.

“World God. Chaos Immortal.” Ning could sense that these two posed a deadly threat to him.

Although he had just barely reached the World God threshold when using Violetjewel, the difference in power between him and these two figures who had long ago crossed that threshold was still quite apparent.

“Respectful greetings to you, seniors.” Ning and Fushe both spoke out with respect. As Elder Gods, they had enough status to speak while remaining on their feet, as opposed to True Gods and True Immortals who had to kneel.

“So you are Darknorth?” The old man dressed in loose white robes spoke

out slowly. He was Chaos Immortal Abyssus.

“I am,” Ning said respectfully.

“You seem quite confident in your skills. You asked for a World-level expert to attest to your strength as soon as you joined the Fogstone Army.” Chaos Immortal Abyssus smiled gently. “You’ve made an impression on all nine of the World-level experts of Fogstone.”

Island Master Fushe had made the report to all nine of the World-level experts, including the Starlord of Fogstone. Immortal Abyssus was the first to respond, but all nine of them knew about this matter.

“Mmhmm.” World God Blackmist glanced downwards as well while sipping from his winecup.

“Master.” A red-lipped, red-robed standing off to one side suddenly spoke out loudly. “We don’t even know where this Elder God Darknorth came from. Are we supposed to trouble you with every random Elder God or Ancestral Immortal, master? Your disciple is willing to test him out first and see how much power he actually has. If he can’t even beat me, there’s no need whatsoever for you to intervene.”

Immortal Abyssus chuckled.

World God Blackmist played with his winecup, a drunken look in his eyes. “Brother Abyssus, this disciple of yours is pretty strong. You can let him have the first go with this Darknorth fellow.”

“Might as well.” Immortal Abyssus nodded, then instructed, “Disciple, have a little contest with Darknorth. Neither of you are to kill the other.”

“Understood,” the red-robed youth said respectfully.

“Understood,” Ning said as well.

Two World-level experts had made their wishes known. How could he possibly disagree?

Both Immortal Abyssus and World God Blackmist were watching the proceedings from their tables.

“What’s your impression of Darknorth?” Immortal Abyssus asked with a

smile.

“He seems quite calm and confident,” World God Blackmist said. “He should have a bit of strength.”

Immortal Abyssus nodded in agreement. “Then who do you think will win, Abyssus?”

“Let’s watch and see.” World God Abyssus had a look of curiosity on his face.

Restrictive spells automatically sprang into place within the hall, completely covering both Ji Ning and the red-robed youth.

Ning and the red-robed youth stared at each other from within.

“Listen up. My name is Shadesoar.” The red-robed youth produced a pair of swords within his two hands. “My area of expertise is sword-arts.”

“My area of expertise is also sword-arts.” Ning also produced a pair of Darknorth swords. Previously, he had merely used his palms and the [Starseizing Hand] to crush Elder God Blackpeak. Now that he was performing in front of a pair of World-level experts, Ning felt it was best to be cautious. He was still able to perform sword-arts better with his swords, after all.

The sword was both sharper and faster.

“His area of expertise is sword-arts?” Ancestral Immortal Imperius and Island Master Fushe were both surprised. Ji Ning had fought in a tyrannical, dominating fashion earlier. He was actually a sword-user as well?

“He also uses the sword?” World God Blackmist let out a laugh. There were two World-level experts on Fogstone who were extremely skilled in using the sword. One was the Starlord of Fogstone, who had devised and was willing to sell his ‘Skystar Sword’ manual to those who were willing to pay the right price. The second was World God Blackmist. World God Blackmist was very good friends with the Starlord of Fogstone; it could be said he had watched as the Starlord of Fogstone slowly grew up and rose to power.

World God Blackmist had actually taught the Starlord of Fogstone his sword-arts. But of course, Fogstone was now far more powerful than Blackmist by now.

“A competition between two swordsmen. This will be interesting.” Immortal Abyssus smiled. “Blackmist, if Darknorth is skilled you can choose him as your disciple.”

“I told you, I’ll never accept a disciple,” World God Blackmist said.

Immortal Abyssus secretly shook his head.

Long ago, World God Blackmist had a disciple. After that disciple died, Blackmist refused to accept any more disciples.

Suddenly, both Ning and the red-robed youth made their moves as they charged towards each other.

Both had reached extremely high levels of expertise in sword-arts and were able to control their divine power freely, letting none of it leak out or go to waste.

“Fifth-stage swordforce? His sword-arts are quite impressive as well.” Ning immediately felt a hint of pressure as he started to fight against the red-robed youth. The youth’s sword-arts were nimbler and more agile than his, like an antelope galloping through the woods or a pegasus flying the skies. Every single strike of the sword moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos; clearly, he had also learned and mastered a technique similar to the [Five Treasures].

None of this surprised Ning. This was a disciple of a Chaos Immortal, after all; it made sense for him to possess this type of technique.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

By comparison, Ning’s sword-arts were more unpredictable and formless.

Ning was using the ‘Shadowless’ stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art. The red-robed youth found that this stance was extremely difficult to block.

“Your sword-arts aren’t bad, but if this is all you have, you aren’t qualified to exchange blows with my master,” the red-robed youth barked out while fighting.

“Then you had best be careful!” Ning let out a loud roar.

BOOM!

Ning’s two fluttering swords suddenly exploded with might. His swords had previously moved in strange, unpredictable ways. All of a sudden, they grew dramatically more powerful than before. Prior to this, Ning hadn’t been using the [Starseizing Hand], while the red-robed youth had actually already used his own divine abilities. Only by doing so was he able to match Ning, a half-step World God, in might. Now that Ning was using the [Starseizing Hand], the power of his blows increased dramatically.

Fast, strong, bizarre...

Ning’s sword-light brought such tremendous pressure upon the youth that his face changed. His body blurred as he manifested a total of six arms, but Ning immediately manifested six arms of his own as he continued to press the assault.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning’s sword-light struck with incredible weight and savagery, causing the nimble sword-arts of the red-robed youth to be completely disrupted.

Boom!

A streak of sword-light slammed against the red-robed youth’s body. The youth was knocked flying backwards and fell to the ground, causing even the palace hall itself trembled slightly. The red-robed youth couldn’t help but vomit out a mouthful of blood.

“He’s just a bit stronger than me, that’s all.” The red-robed youth didn’t want to accept the loss and wished to charge towards Ning once more.

“Enough.”

A voice rang out from on high. “If you lost, you lost.”

“Yes, Master.” Rather embarrassed, the red-robed youth assented in a

respectful voice. He had wanted to defeat this unknown Elder God, but instead he himself had been defeated. In terms of sword-arts, he was actually one of the top three Fogstone soldiers...and yet, he had been defeated by this Darknorth.

“What do you think?” Immortal Abyssus looked towards World God Blackmist. “You are more qualified to judge him than I am.”

World God Blackmist looked downwards at Ning, a hint of praise in his eyes. “This Darknorth has reached a very high level of skill in sword-arts. It seemed as though the two were on par with each other, with Shadesoar only losing because he was a bit weaker, but...in this fight, Darknorth’s techniques came out in a steady, unbroken stream. His techniques were very well-rounded and perfected, allowing him to battle in a very natural, unrestrained manner. If my guess is correct, Darknorth has revealed just a hint of his true prowess with the sword. He hasn’t shown his most formidable techniques yet.”

“Oh?” Immortal Abyssus was rather surprised.

World God Blackmist had long ago reached the ‘Sword World’ level in the sword. He was better equipped to evaluate sword-arts than almost anyone else.

“Although he hasn’t revealed his most formidable techniques yet, he isn’t able to hide the slick perfection of the techniques he has revealed.” World God Blackmist smiled. “It is very hard for a weakling to pretend to be an expert of the sword, but it is also very hard for an expert of the sword to pretend to be a weakling. Every single stance he uses is extraordinary, as is his sword-intent. Abyssus, I have a rather unreasonable request to make.”

“Oh? What is it?” Immortal Abyssus asked.

“Let me be the one to compete with him instead.” World God Blackmist put down his cup of wine. “Only when I personally test him out will I be sure as to exactly how strong he is.”

“Haha, my attainments in the Dao of the Sword are quite average. You are actually the best choice possible.” Immortal Abyssus nodded in



agreement.

# Chapter 10: World God Blackmist

Chaos Immortal Abyssus and World God Blackmist both suddenly turned to look towards the outside of the hall.

Whoosh.

Another figure suddenly walked into the hall.

Ji Ning, the red-robed youth, Ancestral Immortal Imperius, and Island Master Fushe all turned their heads to look. The new arrival was a man who was dressed in a robe of stars. He had long black hair, with every single strand of hair glimmering with the light of the stars. His gaze caused Ning and the others to feel an uncontrollable desire to drop their eyes.

“This aura...” Ning’s heart trembled. Upon seeing this man who had just arrived, he felt as though he was seeing the planet of Fogstone itself glittering within the skies.

“Starlord.” Immortal Abyssus had already risen to his feet. He immediately waved his hand, causing a third table to appear in the center of the hall. He and World God Blackmist quickly seated themselves to either side of the table.

“Starchild.” World God Blackmist rose to his feet as well.

Whoosh.

The starry-robed man moved to the front of the hall, then sat down in the lotus position as well. He smiled. “Second Uncle, Abyssus, please take a seat. Don’t stand on such ceremony. I just heard a short while ago that an Elder God named Darknorth wishes to join our Fogstone Army. I just so happened to leave my meditations and had nothing to do, so I came over to take a look.”

“Haha, Blackmist was just about to personally test this Darknorth’s power.” Immortal Abyssus smiled. He was very respectful towards the Starlord of Fogstone because the Starlord was an incredibly powerful figure. Compared to him, even the other two nearby hegemonies such as

God Emperor Blacklotus and Sovereign Eastvictor were a bit lacking.

Immortal Abyssus truly admired him, which was why he was willing to take up residence here.

“Second Uncle, you plan to personally test him out? Haha, it seems like my decision to come here was the right one.” The Starlord laughed.

“Darknorth seems to be quite talented in the Dao of the Sword.” World God Blackmist nodded his head and smiled. The little kid really had grown up and become powerful.

The Starlord of Fogstone, Immortal Abyssus, and World God Blackmist chatted amongst themselves. None of the others could hear a thing.

“Is that the Starlord of Fogstone?” Ning and the others, including the disciples of Immortal Abyssus, all felt breathless.

The Starlord of Fogstone was a legend.

Strictly speaking, every single Starlord of Fogstone had been a figure of incredible power. Fogstone had a long, ancient history that stretched even further back than the lineage of the Badlands Court itself! Whenever a successor became powerful, the previous Starlord of Fogstone would depart and go out to adventure through the primordial chaos. They would search for their own paths, and as a result many of them would die on other worlds during their adventures.

After adventuring for many years, some would come back and visit their old home. Thus, although every so often the Fogstone lineage would be wiped out, in every case it had been quickly restored to power once more.

In addition, whenever any of the successors formally assumed the mantle of ‘Starlord of Fogstone’, they would suddenly become dramatically more powerful.

One of the reasons why Ning had decided to join Fogstone was precisely because the Starlords of Fogstone had very deep roots. They could rely on the power of Fogstone itself to quickly improve themselves.

“Darknorth.” Immortal Abyssus spoke out.

“Present.” Ning replied with respect.

“It shall be World God Blackmist who tests you out,” Immortal Abyssus said. “World God Blackmist has long ago reached the ‘Sword World’ level in the Dao of the Sword. Don’t waste this opportunity.”

“Understood.” Ning grew excited.

Sword World?

The sixth stage of swordforce? The stage which allowed one to become a World God through the Dao of the Sword?

“My second uncle rarely shows his power. You need to treasure this,” the Starlord of Fogstone said with a laugh.

“I won’t take advantage of you, kid.” World God Blackmist waved his finger, causing a drop of blood to fly towards Ning and manifest into an identical clone of Blackmist. However, this clone’s aura was noticeably weaker. “This blood incarnation is a bit weaker than an ordinary Elder God. Use your most powerful attacks against me.”

“Alright.” Ning’s eyes lit up.

Ning and Blackmist’s incarnation stared at each other from afar.

Blackmist’s incarnation was rather weak in both speed and strength for an Elder God, while Ning was a half-step World God. This gave Ning a huge advantage...but Ning knew that his opponent was at a much higher level of skill and enlightenment than himself.

“Senior Blackmist, this is the most powerful sword-art I have developed to date. Please provide me with some advice,” Ning said solemnly, holding a single sword with a twohanded grip. The entire hall suddenly seemed to echo with his sword-intent as Ning took complete control over the entire area.

[Nameless] sword-art, Heartsword stance!

Ning had gone into seclusion for three hundred years after the Endwar, which translated into six thousand years in the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance. Although he had spent much of the six thousand years restoring

his bodies, most of his attention had been spent on meditating on the Dao and on the Sword. His sword-arts were even more formidable and perfected than they had been when he had slain Old Man Yuan.

Swish! Ning flew forward, his entire being seeming to have transformed into a sword.

“This sword-intent....he really is a true expert in the Dao of the Sword.” Blackmist’s incarnation let out a laugh as he produced a sword and began to fight against Ning.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Tens of thousands of sword-shadows appeared as the two furiously battled against each other.

Ning possessed tremendous power, formidable divine abilities, and shocking sword-arts. World God Blackmist’s sword, however, was even more unpredictable and ephemeral, causing each of Ning’s strikes to fall empty and miss their mark.

“Second Uncle, you probably won’t be able to do anything to Darknorth with just an incarnation. He has gained certain insights into the true essence of the sword. Although he’s lacking in other respects, his control and mastery over the sword has reached a level of perfection.” The Starlord of Fogstone was even more skilled in the Dao of the Sword than World God Blackmist. Upon seeing this battle, he immediately laughed and gave his input.

“He shows no openings or weaknesses at all. With every step he takes, he crushes down upon me, taking advantage of the fact that I don’t have enough divine power.” The incarnation of Blackmist simply didn’t have enough divine power to fight. “I need to take part with my true body.”

Swoosh.

World God Blackmist suddenly flew away from his seat, dispelling his clone and instead charging forward to battle against Ning personally.

“What? World God Blackmist has engaged with his own body?”

“The incarnation of World God Blackmist wasn’t enough to deal with Darknorth?” All the spectators, including Island Master Fushe and the disciples of Immortal Abyssus, were stunned.

Immortal Abyssus himself was also puzzled. “Brother Blackmist is tremendously skilled with the sword. Although his incarnation is a bit lacking in physical strength, brother Blackmist should be talented enough in sword-arts to defeat Darknorth despite being physically weaker.”

“That’s where you are wrong,” the Starlord of Fogstone said. “The Dao of the Sword is a Dao meant for battle and slaughter. Thus, when most swordsmen reach a sufficiently high level of insight into the Dao of the Sword, they will first gain insight over the sword-intent of slaughter. This Darknorth, however, didn’t gain insight into the sword-intent of slaughter; instead, he gained insight into something else, a sort of absolute control over the sword. He’s able to unleash the maximum power of every single stance he uses while showing almost no weaknesses or flaws, making it extremely difficult for anyone on the same level of power as him to actually defeat him.”

“Absolute control?” Immortal Abyssus didn’t really understand.

The Starlord of Fogstone chuckled calmly. “The true essence of the sword is a vast, endless sea. Different experts in the Dao of the Sword will gain different insights when they study the essence of the sword. The insights Darknorth gained pertain to control, control over the sword. His sword isn’t the fastest, nor is it the sharpest, but he has the most perfect control over his sword.”

Indeed.

The deceased World God Northrest had left behind ninety-eight stone steles for his successor, so as to help his successor master the concept of the ‘hidden edge’. This was a concept that centered around control, not an all-out attack. Later on, Ning had finally mastered the ‘Heartsword stance’ during the Endwar. The [Nameless] sword-art required its practitioners to have absolute control over their Immortal swords. If one couldn’t fully control the sword as one wished, then one would never be able to become

truly powerful, no matter how strong one's blows became.

"This is a level which many experts of the Dao of the Sword dream of reaching. If you are completely flawless, then when you encounter an enemy of the same level of power it will be very difficult for that person to defeat you." The Starlord laughed. "I only reached this level after I became a World God. My second uncle still has yet to reach this level of mastery. He's embarked on a different path in the Dao of the Sword."

World God Blackmist suppressed his own power as he fought, strictly competing against Ning in sword-arts.

Rumble...

Sword-light flashed throughout the hall.

Ning felt as though he had been trapped in a web of countless sword-shadows, all of which were crushing down upon him. He couldn't even see any of the other people in the hall. All he could see were those attacking streaks of sword-light, each of which seemed to emerge from a black mist of sword-shadows. Every single blow was ghostly yet brutal and overbearing.

"Kid, this here is my Sword World. Take a good look!" World God Blackmist's voice echoed in the hall.

Ning was using every inch of power he had to defend. Supported by the 'Heartsword Realm', his [Brightmoon] sword-art was executed in a perfect, intricate manner...and yet, he still was at the verge of being defeated. All he could do was fight with full power, infusing all of the insights he had gained into his sword-arts.

In recent years, Ning hadn't been able to meet a truly skilled opponent in the Dao of the Sword! He had been painstakingly training on his own this entire time. Now, however, a World God who had mastered his own Sword World was sparring against him in person, giving him a chance to see a completely new world and gain an even deeper glimpse into the true, vast essence of the sword. In fact, Ning was actually beginning to gain more and more insights into the second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art.

“Six thousand years of training wasn’t as useful as this single battle.” A berserk look appeared in Ning’s eyes as he did everything he could to continue fighting against World God Blackmist. He tested out many of the insights he had gained into the Dao of the Sword, hoping that this battle against World God Blackmist would persist for a bit longer.

In fact, his sword-arts were improving at a rate which was visible to all the spectators.

“He’s growing more powerful?”

The Starlord of Fogstone continued to watch from his position, and his eyes lit up when he saw this. “It seems that this Darknorth has never encountered true experts in the Dao of the Sword in the past. Second Uncle, spend some extra time sparring with him! It’s quite rare for us to acquire such an expert in the Dao of the Sword.”



# Chapter 11: The Sixth General

Only when competing against a grandmaster of the sword would one truly be able to see one's own weaknesses.

Although Ji Ning's 'Sword Realm' was very formidable, allowing him to perfectly control every single sword-strike he used, its weakness was that it was too balanced. His sword wasn't fast enough, unpredictable enough, savage enough...it was lacking in many respects. When World God Blackmist used his sword-arts against Ning, Ning was completely suppressed in every respect. Blackmist's sword-arts were truly terrifying and contained an entire system within it.

The Sword World level represented a systemized understanding of the true essence of the sword, allowing one to form an entire world with it. World God Blackmist clearly had already reached that level.

Slash.

Swish.

"That's how it should be."

"The second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art...no wonder I always felt something was off."

"Right..."

During this battle, many of the questions and mysteries that had puzzled Ning were dispelled one after the other, causing Ning to feel quite excited. In his homeland of Earth, there was a saying; 'Listening to a word of wisdom from a master is more effective than ten years of reading.' When competing against such a formidable master of the sword such as World God Blackmist, Ning found that he was improving at a shocking rate. He had trained for many years but had never encountered someone as terrifyingly formidable in the Dao of the Sword before.

World God Blackmist had clearly suppressed his own level of power, allowing just a little bit of it to be put on display. If he was to allow the power of his Sword World to fully explode, it would be effortless for him

to destroy an entire chaosworld.

Although Ning continued to make improvements, he was still very puny compared to the true might of this Sword World.

“A killing stance...”

“Right. This stance doesn’t focus on stability; it focuses on attacking and killing.”

Ning slowly began to understand.

[Nameless] sword-art, first stance – Heartsword stance.

[Nameless] sword-art, second stance – Killsword stance.

“He truly is talented in the Dao of the Sword.” Immortal Abyssus watched from on high as World God Blacklist dueled against Ji Ning. Every single streak of sword-light from Ji Ning was more powerful and fiercer than the last as his Dao of the Sword noticeably grew sharper and deadlier.

“He is improving quite quickly. My guess is that Darknorth hasn’t been training for that long,” the Starlord of Fogstone said with a smile.

“Agreed.” Immortal Abyssus nodded.

If one didn’t reach the World-level in a single chaos cycle, it was almost guaranteed that one would never reach that level.

For Ji Ning to improve so quickly when dueling with a master of the Dao of the Sword meant that he was clearly still in his early growth period. And in truth, the reason why his rate of improvement was this fast was primarily because he had never before had the chance to duel such an expert of the sword.

“B-but...” As the red-robed disciple of Immortal Abyssus watched this fight, he felt more embarrassed than anyone else.

“Now do you understand the difference between the two of you?” Ancestral Immortal Imperius laughed.

“Please don’t make fun of me, eldest apprentice-brother.” The red-robed

youth said hurriedly, “Only now do I realize that Elder God Darknorth was taking it easy on me. If he had revealed such terrifying sword-arts from the very start, I probably would’ve been instantly defeated. His sword-arts have completely eclipsed the sword-arts of so-called ‘supreme Elder Gods’. He should be comparable to our five generals. Most likely you, eldest apprentice-brother, are the only one who is definitely capable of defeating him.”

“If eldest apprentice-brother fights, of course he’ll win.”

“No question.”

All of the fellow disciples agreed on this.

Chaos Immortal Abyssus had only joined this place after adventuring for many years in the outside world, and as he did so he was accompanied by his eldest disciple, Ancestral Immortal Imperius. Imperius was unfathomably strong, but he had never joined the Fogstone Army. He was a very low-key figure, but the disciples of Chaos Immortal Abyssus and the high-level members of Fogstone all knew that the most powerful figure below the World-level on this planet was actually Imperius. In fact, the five generals had once joined together to challenge him in secret, but all five of them had been defeated.

Imperius was simply a low-key man who didn’t like to fight.

Because he had been training for far more than a chaos cycle, his master and the Starlord didn’t force him to go out and adventure, allowing him to live his low-key life on Fogstone.

“Beating him wouldn’t be easy.” Imperius watched as Ning continued to battle against World God Blackmist. “All of you are underestimating him. When World God Blackmist first used an incarnation to fight, his sword-arts were actually incredibly powerful. Despite that, he still wasn’t able to do anything to Darknorth. World God Blackmist has now used his Sword World, but Darknorth is still able to keep fighting. Although World God Blackmist is taking it easy on him, Darknorth’s defensive sword-arts truly have reached a terrifying level.”

“He’s too stable.”

“His defense is airtight and completely flawless. The other five generals each have their own special techniques, but when faced with Darknorth’s airtight defense...eventually, all of them will be defeated. Even I am not confident in being able to defeat him,” Ancestral Immortal Imperius said.

“Completely flawless?” The other disciples, all of whom worshipped their eldest apprentice-brother, were all shocked.

“Given how terrifying his sword-arts are...if he was to acquire a Dao sword...” Ancestral Immortal Imperius shook his head. “That would make him truly dangerous.”

“Agreed.” All of the other disciples nodded.

Darknorth was already incredibly powerful and an expert of the Dao of the Sword. If he had a Dao sword as well...how deadly would he become?!

Ning’s ‘Heartsword Realm’ was a technique allowing him absolute control over himself and his sword. Even those more powerful than him would find it difficult to break his sword stances, unless the difference in power was truly enormous.

The [Nameless] sword-art was simply too formidable.

Even someone like World God Northrest, who had access to the resources of the mighty Vastheaven Palace, had been smitten by this sword-art. And even to the very day of his death, he had still been far from completely mastering the entire [Nameless] sword-art.

Whoosh.

World God Blackmist ceased his attacks.

Ning stood there, his face covered with sweat. His eyes, however, were blazing with excitement. He had been mentally exhausted just now, but he didn’t care at all. This was his first time fighting against such a formidable master of the Dao of the Sword; Ning naturally valued and cherished this opportunity.

“Thank you, senior,” Ning said gratefully.

Ning truly was extremely grateful.

It had been a long battle. At first, his sword-arts had continuously improved, but towards the end he was unable to improve any further. He had already made full use of all the insights and experiences he had gained during six thousand years of meditation in the Three Realms. No rate of explosive could be maintained forever. Clearly, the insights Ning had gained in recent years weren't enough to allow him to truly master the 'Killsword stance' just yet.

However, he now comprehended the majority of the 'Killsword stance'. The parts he had yet to comprehend were the hardest parts...but of course, the power of Ning's sword-arts had increased significantly as well.

"It's rare to encounter someone on Fogstone who understands the Dao of the Sword. You can come seek me out whenever you wish," World God Blackmist said with a smile.

"Understood." Ning was overjoyed.

Although Blackmist had said 'whenever you wish', Ning wouldn't be so foolish as to actually seek him out all the time. When training in the sword, one had to have both insights and actual combat experience! Only when he had enough insights would he seek Blackmist out for another duel.

"Based on how quickly I'm improving...I should be able to master the second stance in about ten thousand years." Ning mused to himself, "If I use the Heavengazer Tower, it should only take me a few centuries."

If it wasn't for World God Blackmist, Ning would probably need a hundred times as much time in order to succeed. In fact, it was entirely possible that Ning would encounter a bottleneck that would stymie him, no matter how hard he tried to breach it. With a capable teacher providing guidance, he would be able to easily make his way past those bottlenecks. A good teacher could make a tremendous difference.

"Darknorth." The Starlord of Fogstone spoke out as Immortal Abyssus and World God Blackmist both looked towards Ning.

"Starlord." Ning looked at him respectfully.

“You are quite strong indeed. Fogstone has a total of five generals. As of today, you are now the sixth.” The Starlord smiled.

Ning was slightly startled. ‘General’ was an important rank; not only did one have to be powerful, one generally also needed to have rendered accomplishments for the organization.

“Understood,” Ning hurriedly said.

“Since you are a general, we won’t place too many restrictions on you,” the Starlord said with a smile. “If my guess is correct, you probably haven’t been training for too long.”

“Right,” Ning said.

“Mm. Since you’ve only trained for a short period of time, I imagine you are definitely working hard to try and break through to the World-level.” The Starlord continued, “That means in the future, you’ll go out adventuring. This is the lifeblood oath I need you to make in order to join the Fogstone Army. It is a fairly loose one.” As he spoke, he waved his hand, causing a scroll to fly down towards Ning.

Ning accepted the scroll. Anyone who wished to join an organization would have to swear a lifeblood oath. However, if one merely joined as a ‘guest retainer’, the terms of the lifeblood oath would generally be much looser.

Ning glanced through the scroll. Indeed, this lifeblood oath was a fairly relaxed one. It placed almost negligible constraints on Ning, only requiring him to be loyal to Fogstone.

“Starlord,” Ning said respectfully. “Can we make a slight alteration to this oath?”

“Alteration?” The Starlord frowned. This oath was already an extremely loose one. “What part needs altering?”

“In the future, my journeys will most likely take me beyond the Badlands Territory,” Ning said respectfully.

“Leave the Badlands?” The three World-level experts were all puzzled.

The Badlands Territory was a vast place with many World-level experts. A territory of this size was more than large enough for an Elder God or Ancestral Immortal to adventure through.

“I don’t have a choice. I’m bound by another lifeblood oath. In the future, I’ll definitely have to leave the Badlands Territory and seek out a place known as Vastheaven Palace.” Ning immediately asked, “Might I ask the three of you, seniors, if you know where Vastheaven Palace is?”

There was no need for him to hide the fact that he had to seek out Vastheaven Palace.

These three World-level figures were all much more experienced than him. Perhaps they might know where Vastheaven Palace lay.

# Chapter 12: Sentinel

World God Blackmist, Chaos Immortal Abyssus, and the Starlord of Fogstone were all slightly startled.

“Vastheaven Palace?” The Starlord glanced towards the other two, puzzled. “I haven’t gone to many places, just the Badlands Territory, the Cicada Territory, and three other territories. You two have been to many more places.”

“I’ve never heard of it either.” World God Blackmist shook his head. “Abyssus, you’ve journeyed through the primordial chaos for quite some time. Have you heard of Vastheaven Palace?”

Chaos Immortal Abyssus glanced downwards dubiously. “Elder God Darknorth, what is this Vastheaven Palace? Is it a region, the name of a palace, or an organization?”

“An organization. It should be quite a powerful one,” Ning said.

“Haven’t heard of it.”

Abyssus was rather puzzled. “I’ve spent countless years traveling in the territories surrounding the Badlands as well as quite a few distant territories. I’ve been to many places and collected many star maps, but I’ve never heard of an organization known as Vastheaven Palace!”

“The other World-level members of Fogstone have been to far fewer places than Abyssus has. If not even Abyssus has heard of this place, it must be located extremely far away or in a very remote area. In fact, it could’ve been wiped out many chaos cycles ago,” the Starlord said.

A chill entered Ning’s heart.

World God Northrest, what did you do? You ran around in such a crazy manner that even a sword like Violetjewel was nearly destroyed, ending up in a place you didn’t recognize.

This was going to be even harder than he thought!

World God Northrest had never heard of the Badlands Territory, while



the Starlord of Fogstone, World God Blackmist, and Immortal Abyssus had never heard of Vastheaven Palace! It must be understood that Vastheaven Palace controlled the entire Vastheaven Territory, which meant that it should be a fairly famous organization. And yet, even someone like Immortal Abyssus who had journeyed through many territories had never heard of the place. From this, one could imagine just how far the Badlands Territory was from the Vastheaven Territory.

“Will I be able to find it within a single chaos cycle?” Ning began to worry.

“I’ll help you ask the other World-level experts about Vastheaven Palace. I’ll also ask my friends if any of them have heard of it,” the Starlord said.

“Thank you, Starlord.” Ning nodded.

The Starlord gazed downwards at Ning, then shook his head and laughed. “That’s all I can really do. However...if not even Immortal Abyssus has heard of the place, it’s unlikely that any of my friends would have heard of it. Mm, right. Yes, we can make a slight alteration to the lifeblood oath you need to swear in order to join the Fogstone Army.” As he spoke, he pointed at the scroll. A twinkling little sparkle of star light instantly descended, covering the scroll in Ning’s hands and changing its contents.

“What do you think?” The Starlord asked.

Ning lowered his head to look at it. There were now even fewer restrictions than before, and once he became a World God there would be virtually no restrictions on him whatsoever.

“If you are willing to accept this, you can swear the lifeblood oath now,” the Starlord said.

“Yes,” Ning said respectfully, scroll in hand. This scroll effectively acted as an oathstone on its own.

“I swear on my very life itself...”

From this day forth, Ning was now a formal member of Fogstone. Even if trillions of years passed and he became far more powerful than he was

now, he would still be a member of Fogstone.

Within the hall.

After Ning swore the lifeblood oath, the gazes of the Starlord, World God Blackmist, and Immortal Abyssus all turned warmer as they looked at him. They were now on the same boat, after all.

“Per our usual rules, you should be bestowed with some treasures and techniques now that you have joined the Fogstone Army,” the Starlord said. “In a short while, I’ll arrange for Fushe lead you to the treasury and get your things.”

“Alright,” Ning said.

“However, be aware that Fogstone has many cultivators; we can’t just give you all of our treasures,” the Starlord said. “Thus, if you wish to acquire more than just the base package, you’ll have to render merits to the organization. Would you prefer to remain here on Fogstone, or would you prefer to venture outside and do battle on our behalf?”

“I’m willing to go out and do battle,” Ning said respectfully.

The Starlord smiled and nodded.

“Starlord,” Ning immediately said, “I’d like to ask you a question. How many people in the Badlands Territory know the ‘Blacklotus Guard’ technique, are Heartforce Cultivators, and are at least at the supreme Elder God level of power?”

“The ‘Blacklotus Guard’ is one of the consummate techniques of God Emperor Blacklotus. He will never teach it to an outsider, much like how we won’t teach outsiders our truly supreme skills either. Only the less important techniques will be transmitted to others.” The Starlord of Fogstone chuckled. “A Heartforce Cultivator who knows the ‘Blacklotus Guard’ and is at least a supreme Elder God...the only one who fulfills all of these requirements is one of his Nine Divine Generals, the Mindlord.”

“Does the Mindlord have a Primaltwin?” Ning asked.

“He did.” The Starlord nodded. “Based on what I know, the Mindlord’s

Primaltwin headed off to the Earthdrake area roughly a chaos cycle and ended up dying there.”

Ning was startled. The Earthdrake area? Wasn't that the area he was from? Died a chaos cycle ago? Wasn't Old Man Yuan possessed during the Primordial Era? There couldn't be that many coincidences.

“So it really is the Mindlord.” A flicker of a killing intent appeared in Ning's eyes. It made sense. He had the feeling that Godfiend Witherspike was telling the truth. As an extremely powerful cultivator who was skilled in heartforce, he was generally able to tell when others were lying to him or not. Perhaps true Heartforce Cultivators like Old Man Yuan would be able to deceive him, but people like Witherspike didn't have skills in this area.

“You have a feud with the Mindlord?” The Starlord of Fogstone asked.

“I do,” Ning said respectfully.

“Oh...” The Starlord pondered a moment, then said, “How about this? Of the chaosworlds under my command, the Windsource Chaosworld lies closest to God Emperor Blacklotus' domain. Combat occurs quite often there, which is why we have more than three hundred Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals stationed there permanently. You can go to the Windsource Chaosworld.”

“We already have a leader for our forces there,” World God Blackmist said.

The Starlord waved his hand, manifesting an insignia that glimmered with starlight. He tossed the insignia to Ning, who hurriedly reached out to catch it. The insignia had the word ‘Sentinel’ on it.

“This is the Sentinel insignia,” the Starlord said. “From this day forth, you are my designated Sentinel. When you reach the Windsource Chaosworld, you will be my representative. All the cultivators of the Windsource Chaosworld will obey your commands.”

“Yes,” Ning said respectfully.

“Also, I'll send the word and make sure that the news of your arrival is

kept quiet,” the Starlord said. “You’ve just joined us a short while ago; very few people know of your presence. I imagine that God Emperor Blacklotus and his forces don’t even know about you yet. Their ignorance of your allegiance to us will make it easier for you to strike out against them and take revenge. The Nine Divine Generals of God Emperor Blacklotus often travel to the Windsource Chaosworld. You’ll definitely find a chance to fight the Mindlord.”

“Thank you, Starlord.” Ning was overjoyed. This was a perfect arrangement. To be the Starlord’s Sentinel was quite a lofty position.

“Be careful.” World God Blackmist instructed, “The armies of God Emperor Blacklotus aren’t so easily dealt with.”

“Yes.” Ning was still filled with eagerness.

Sword-arts were meant for battle. Only in battle would his sword-arts be tempered and improved! Ning’s [Nameless] sword-art in particular needed both time and actual combat experience.

“Fushe, go ahead and lead Darknorth to the treasury. After he has his items, he can immediately head off towards the Windsource Chaosworld,” the Starlord instructed.

“Yes,” Island Master Fushe said respectfully.

Ning and Fushe then departed the hall together.

“What do you think?” The Starlord looked towards the other two.

“An excellent choice.” Immortal Abyssus chuckled. “We’re lucky to have such a formidable expert in the Dao of the Sword join us. My guess is that this Darknorth holds an enormous grudge against the Mindlord, which is the reason why he decided to join Fogstone to begin with. Otherwise, given his sword-arts he could have easily joined any organization aside from the Badlands Court.”

“That’s why I arranged for him to be in the Windsource Chaosworld,” the Starlord said.

The border regions between two major organizations served as a meat

grinder. Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals often died there. As far as both sides were concerned, the border regions were a good place for the cultivators of both sides to gain experience through life-and-death battles. Only then would they be able to grow more quickly.

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“Congratulations, brother Darknorth. You are now our sixth general.” Island Master Fushe flew alongside Ning as they left the Abyssus Palace. “When you go to the Windsource Chaosworld as the Starlord’s Sentinel, you’ll be the undisputed leader of our forces there. Being the leader of a chaosworld is quite an excellent position. All of the cultivators in the Windsource Chaosworld will try to curry favor with you.”

“Curry favor with me?” Ning was puzzled.

“Of course. You will be guarding the place as the Starlord’s representative. You can easily cause problems for any of them. They wouldn’t dare to NOT curry favor with you.” Fushe laughed. “Look, the Starlord’s estate is over there.”

Ning turned to look, only to see an enormous, city-sized estate appear in the distance. The estate was surrounded by countless sparks of star light, as though it was the very center of the entire planet of Fogstone.

“Ordinary Elder God soldiers might exhaust themselves for an entire chaos cycle without being able to acquire the treasures and techniques you are about to get.” Fushe had a look of envy on his face as he led Ning into the Starlord’s estate.

# Chapter 13: Statues

The Starlord's estate was tens of thousands of kilometers in size. It was filled with countless edifices and emanated an aura of supreme power.

"What are...?" Upon entering the estate, Ji Ning immediately stared off into the distance in amazement.

As soon as he had entered, the first things he saw were those grayish-white statues, all shaped like humanoids. There was a statue of a dominating man whose hair was flying about, a statue of an icy, beautiful woman, a statue of a crazy old man who was roaring with laughter, a statue of a youth who was filled with a murderous aura...

Every single statue seemed to be almost alive. However, they were clearly just lifeless stone sculptures.

"What are those?" Ning was puzzled.

"Those are all World-level experts." Upon seeing those distant statues, a complicated look entered Fushe's eyes. He said softly, "Deceased World-level experts."

"Deceased?" Ning instantly understood. "So when World-level experts of Fogstone die, they are memorialized here in the form of stone sculptures?"

Island Master Fushe slowly shook his head. "These are their corpses!"

"Corpses?" Ning was stunned. He turned his head to stare at the statues once more. There were dozens of them, and all of them were completely lifeless. They had no aura of life, divine power, or Immortal energy. It must be understood that even the corpse of an ordinary Fiendgod would radiate an aura of divine power. If a Chaos Immortal was to die, his corpse would continue to emanate an aura of extraordinary power.

But these stone statues...Ning couldn't see anything special about them at all.

"These are all the World Gods of Fogstone who have died since time immemorial," Fushe said softly. "They all used the [Fogstone Apocalypse] divine ability to fight against their foes, then perished in battle."

“[Fogstone Apocalypse]?” Ning was puzzled.

“Fogstone’s lineage is an ancient one, even more ancient than the lineage of the Badlands Court, the most powerful organization in the Badlands Territory. Although the Badlands Court is more powerful, Fogstone actually ranks as one of the three oldest lineages of the Badlands Territory and is far older than the Badlands Court. Actually, there are many organizations in the Badlands Territory which are older than the Badlands Court, but quite a few of them were wiped out. In the end, power is what matters. The Badlands Court was established by Daolord Badlands; it naturally is the ruler of the entire Badlands Territory.”

Island Master Fushe continued, “The most powerful divine ability the Fogstone lineage possesses is the [Fogstone Apocalypse] technique. Only Fiendgod Body Refiners can train in it, and only World Gods can fully master it. This divine ability is never taught to outsiders.”

Although Ning had purchased a star map and learned a bit of information about the region, the star map had included very little information about the truly peerless techniques which existed here.

“When you use this divine ability, your body will slowly transform into fogstone. If you completely master it and use it, your entire body will become transformed into fogstone.” Fushe shook his head. “During the petrification process, you will become terrifyingly powerful...but there’s always a catch. If you run out of divine power after you complete the transformation process, you will transform into a fogstone statue and perish.”

“What?” Ning was stunned.

“This will only happen to the World Gods of Fogstone in the most dire of situations. Generally speaking, if you halt the divine ability once your divine power begins to run low, you’ll be able to stay alive. These World Gods all died in battle,” Fushe said softly.

Ning stared at the stone statues.

These were all World Gods who had died countless years ago...

They had been forced into dire situations where they had no choice but to go all out. Some of the World Gods died laughing, some died while furious, and some died calmly. This truly stunned Ning. It reminded him that the path of cultivation was one which was filled with countless dangers which could fell even a World God. World God Northrest was another classic example.

“Let’s go,” Fushe said.

“Right.” Ning bowed respectfully towards the statues, then followed behind Fushe.

The first thing Ning acquired was a suit of armor. As the sixth general of the Fogstone Army, Ning was given a suit of top-grade Chaos armor.

“These are the abridged jade slips which hold information about the many techniques Fogstone has to offer.” A series of jade slips floated out from the deep recesses of a dark hall. There were thousands of them, and all of them glowed with light. “The dimmer ones are the more ordinary techniques, while the brighter ones hold the elite techniques. As for the brightest slips, they hold the consummate techniques that cannot be taught to outsiders.”

Ning stood there within the dark room, staring at the levitating jade slips. There were only twelve of the brightest jade slips.

“The consummate techniques that cannot be taught to outsiders can only be learned by the generals of the Fogstone Army, as well as the personal disciples of our World Gods,” Fushe said.

“Oh?”

Ning immediately sent his coresense forward, scanning those twelve jade slips with it.

Ning was immediately shocked by what he found.

Fogstone truly had a deep foundation! Of the twelve jade slips, three were sword-arts...and all three were extraordinary.

The most powerful was the [Illusory Starsword] technique. It had a total



of nine stances, and by training to the fifth stance one would reach the Sword World stage.

“Although it is quite formidable, it’s still a bit lacking compared to my [Nameless] sword-art. The [Nameless] sword-art is even more profound and exquisite.” Ning was an expert of the Dao of the Sword; naturally, he was able to tell which was better and which was worse. The [Nameless] sword-art’s creator had to be at an incredibly, incredibly high level of mastery. This was why even his first stance, the ‘Heartsword stance’, was so profound as to allow cultivators to completely and fully control each stroke of the sword. The further one delved into the [Nameless] sword-art, the more profound it became.

As for other sword-arts, they might be quite powerful as well, but their visions and their intents were more limited in scope, making them inferior.

“I’ll continue to focus on the [Nameless] sword-art.” Ning actually ignored all three of these sword-arts.

[World of Dust], [Eternal Demonheart], [Violet Smoke Diagram], [Fogstone Apocalypse]...

These divine abilities and secret arts all made Ning sigh in amazement.

Incredible.

Simply incredible.

World God Northrest was a member of Vastheaven Palace, but he was unable to transfer its most consummate skills to Ji Ning. All the skills he had given Ning were the ones which he himself had acquired through his dangerous adventures. The [Nameless] sword-art and the [Golden Statue] divine ability were two extremely formidable techniques, but the rest of the techniques he had handed over were somewhat weaker. As for the consummate arts of Fogstone, they were superior to all but the [Nameless] sword-art.

The partial scroll of the [World of Dust] was a good example. This was a technique for devising seals and tags of tremendous power. Although the

scroll was incomplete, Ning could sense from the abridged version of jade slip that this technique should be on the same level as the [Nameless] sword-art. Unfortunately, it was incomplete. According to the records, no one was even able to gain a basic level of expertise in it; it was nothing more than an incomplete, fragmentary record of a seal-devising technique.

Although Ning's [Nameless] sword-art was also incomplete, at least the first stance through seventh stance were included in their entirety. Even World God Northrest had been able to train to the fifth stance, which proved that the [Nameless] sword-art was something which Ning could train in for a long, long period of time.

"The Fogstone Apocalypse...what a powerful divine ability." Ning sighed in amazement.

The [Fogstone Apocalypse] technique was divided into three stages.

The first stage allowed minor parts of the body to transform into fogstone, such as the hair. The transformation was a fairly minute one, but it still allowed one's divine power to increase dramatically in power.

The second stage allowed for large-scale transformation of the body, allowing even the bones to transform into fogstone.

As for the third stage, it completely transformed the entire body into fogstone, giving one a perfect fogstone body. When a World God's body was completely transformed into fogstone, his body would become as tough and as resilient as a Dao weapon. A body like this was capable of withstanding tremendously powerful explosions of divine power. The [Starseizing Hand] only allowed the hands to withstand such tremendous power; the [Fogstone Apocalypse] allowed every single part of the body to burst with absolutely inconceivable might.

The first stage alone was already comparable to the Sixth Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand].

"Choose wisely," Island Master Fushe said "You are a general. You may choose either ten of the more ordinary techniques, one of the elite techniques, or part of the consummate techniques."

The consummate techniques would not be taught in their entirety at once.

Ning carefully went through the jade slips. A long while later, he made his decision.

“I choose this, the [Fogstone Apocalypse],” Ning said.

“Ah?” Fushe was rather surprised. He had actually told Ning about the fogstone statues earlier, after all. He couldn’t help but ask, “Are you sure?”

“Yes.” Ning nodded.

This divine ability was extremely powerful. The second stage of it was comparable to a theoretical Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand], which Ning hadn’t even been able to develop yet.

Ning had chosen this divine ability for two reasons. He wanted to train in it, but he also wanted to analyze it and use its mysteries to help him in his quest to develop the Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand]. After that, Ning would want to develop an Eighth Cycle and perhaps even a Ninth Cycle!

A short while later, Ning received the full jade slip. Within this jade slip was recorded the first part of the [Fogstone Apocalypse] technique. The first part included just the first stage and the second stage, which could both be used by Elder Gods. Only World Gods could train in the third stage.

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“Brother Fushe, I’ve been given orders by the Starlord. I’ll head out towards the Windsource Chaosworld right away.” Outside the Starlord’s estate, Ning was bidding Fushe farewell.

“The Windsource Chaosworld is a place where we often clash with God Emperor Blacklotus’ troops. Be careful, brother Darknorth,” Fushe said.

Ning nodded, then soared into the skies and headed towards the direction of the Windsource Chaosworld.

# Chapter 14: Windsource Chaosworld

The Windsource Chaosworld was an enormous, ellipsoid sphere.

Swoosh.

A boat flew into the Windsource Chaosworld, carrying three cultivators within it. These three cultivators didn't disguise their auras in the slightest.

"Why have the three of you come to Windsource?" The air shimmered momentarily before a black-robed Ancestral Immortal appeared. This Ancestral Immortal had a pair of wings on his back and a white horn growing out of his forehead.

"The three of us have come here to scavenge for ancient relics." All three of the cultivators rose to their feet. They had powerful auras and were either Elder Gods or first-tier Ancestral Immortals.

"Here are three bottles of chaos nectar." One of the three, a silver-haired cultivator, waved his hand and sent three bottles of chaos nectar over.

The black-robed Ancestral Immortal accepted the bottles, then said calmly, "Very well. I trust the three of you understand that this is a border world which lies between Fogstone and the Blacklotus Empire. Don't get caught up in our problems."

"We understand," the three cultivators responded, then quickly departed on their boat.

Whoosh.

An old man whose body was surrounded by waves of blood suddenly appeared next to the black-robed Ancestral Immortal. The old man said with a smile, "Whitehorn, was that another group of treasure hunters?"

"Yes." The black-robed Ancestral Immortal waved his hand, revealing the three bottles of chaos nectar.

"Those ancient relic sites have attracted quite a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals over the years. We've collected so much chaos nectar

that my hands are starting to go limp.” The old man shook his head. “A pity that we have to offer all of it up to our superiors. It’d be wonderful if we could keep it for ourselves.”

“Do you think all of those Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would obediently hand over those bottles if they were meant for you?” The black-robed Ancestral Immortal smirked.

The Windsource Chaosworld...

It wasn’t a chaosworld that had been created through completely natural means.

The Pangu Chaosworld and the Seamless Chaosworld had started out as Worldhearts which gave birth to Fiendgods. The strongest of the Fiendgods had established the chaosworld, then perished.

The Windsource Chaosworld, however, had been artificially created by an ancient and enormously powerful figure.

That ancient figure had taken over nearly half of the chaosworld for his own use, transforming it into his own Immortal estate. After he had died, his Immortal estate had become a relic site.

The home of a powerful cultivator, even a deceased one, was an extremely dangerous place. The cultivator would have set down many layers of traps in order to ensure that it would be difficult for anyone to invade. Thus, even though this ancient figure had died, his estate remained filled with layers of dangers.

However, the techniques and treasures which the deceased figure had left behind were also powerful enough to drive countless cultivators wild.

The Windsource Ruins was an incredibly famous place. Even World Gods and Chaos Immortals had lost their lives there. To this very day, the Windsource Ruins was still filled with mysteries. However, the cultivators that managed to survive it and come back with treasures ensured that there would forever be a steady stream of fortune seekers.

Want to try your luck?

No problem. Just pay the entrance fee!

When using a spacetime transfer array, you had to pay a bottle of chaos nectar. This relic site belonged to Fogstone, and so if one wished to visit it one would have to pay the fee. World Gods and Chaos Immortals naturally didn't have to pay anything, but Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals did. Otherwise, they would be surrounded and attacked by the Fogstone Army, which would be a rather miserable ending.

The most profitable enterprise in the Badlands Territory lay in operating spacetime transfer arrays, but all twenty-one of them had been taken over by the Badlands Court! The other powers could do nothing besides envy them.

"Has the Sentinel arrived yet?" A muscular goldscale Fiendgod suddenly appeared next to them.

"Not yet." The black-robed Ancestral Immortal shook his head.

"We've been watching for him this entire time." The old man surrounded by bloody waves was a bit worried. "I wonder what sort of a personality this Sentinel has. Whitehorn and I have been managing the Windsource Chaosworld for several chaos cycles. I hope this new Sentinel won't rip us off too badly."

The Windsource Chaosworld was a world which had been established by an ancient power. Naturally occurring chaosworlds were only able to survive for a single chaos cycle before they would decay and then be reborn. The Windsource Chaosworld was protected by the Windsource Ruins within it and thus had been able to exist for an extremely long period of time.

"I heard that this Sentinel is a new general." The goldscale Fiendgod lowered his voice. "Our Fogstone Army only had a total of five generals, with him becoming the sixth. I've never met this guy either. I have no idea what he is like. Keep praying, you two."

"Right." The other two both felt rather nervous.

Sentinels were responsible for overseeing certain region. They were

given tremendous amounts of power.

Just as the three of them were discussing this new Sentinel...

Swish.

A tear suddenly appeared in the skies on the opposite end of the Windsource Chaosworld. A streak of light flew out from the tear, then came to a halt. It was Ji Ning.

“Eh? Something just happened.” The black-robed Ancestral Immortal, the old man, and the goldscale Fiendgod all hurried over.

As they teleported over, they saw a white-robed youth appear in midair, staring downwards towards this vast chaosworld.

“He looks identical to the painting we were given.” The three of them didn’t hesitate at all, immediately flying over towards Ning. The black-robed Ancestral Immortal immediately asked, “Are you the new Sentinel?”

Ning waved his hand, producing an insignia.

Rumble...

The insignia emitted a wave of overwhelming power that had an aura identical to that of the Starlord’s.

“We bow in greetings to you, Sentinel.” The three of them hurriedly called out respectfully to Ning. There was no way the Sentinel insignia could be counterfeited, and once the Starlord gave it to Ji Ning, he would become the only person capable of using it. No other Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals would be able to use it.

“Mm.” Ning nodded. “The three of you are...?”

“I’m Whitehorn. He’s Bloodsea. The two of us are responsible for managing all affairs of the Windsource Chaosworld, great or small.” The black-robed Ancestral Immortal hurriedly answered the question.

“I am Elder God Mountain Eater.” The goldscale soldier was incredibly muscular, but he had a simple, honest look in his eyes. He said in a low voice, “The 321 Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals stationed in the Windsource Chaosworld all obey my commands. Per the Starlord, from

this day forth I shall obey the Sentinel's commands."

Ning smiled and nodded. Given how many chaosworlds the Starlord commanded, it only made sense that he had designated certain individuals to manage them. Generally speaking, he would arrange for two Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals to watch over each chaosworld as well as each other. In addition, the Starlord would also occasionally send out a Sentinel to oversee certain areas and ensure that the local managers weren't plundering the worlds they were supposed to oversee.

The Windsource Chaosworld was under the management of Ancestral Immortal Whitehorn and Elder God Bloodsea.

"The three of you can simply refer to me as Sword Immortal Sunrise," Ning said. Since the Starlord was helping him to disguise his identity, Ning naturally was going to use a false name as well.

"Sword Immortal Sunrise," the three called out respectfully.

"Where is the Fogstone Army stationed? Take me there," Ning instructed.

"Right over there." Elder God Mountain Eater pointed at a distant chain of mountains. "We all live there in the Eastcalm Mountains."

The mountain range stretched out for thousands of kilometers. The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had all chosen mountain peaks that they liked, then settled down on their respective peaks. The distance between the mountain peaks was negligible to them; once battle began, they would be able to almost instantly gather together.

"Oh?" Ning nodded and smiled. "Then I will live there as well. Brother Mountain Eater, overseeing the Windsource Chaosworld is just a minor part of my duties. The real reason I've come here is to battle against the Blacklotus Empire by your side."

"With you by our side, general, our victory is assured." Elder God Mountain Eater chortled.

"I heard that the Windsource Ruins here are quite famous." Ning turned his head to glance at the Bloodsea and Whitehorn. "Do you have any



reports on the Windsource Ruins which you can share with me? If you do, give me a copy.”

“We do.” The black-robed Ancestral Immortal immediately waved his hand, producing a jade slip which he respectfully offered to Ning.

“Mm. Very well then, that’s all I need from you. Go do whatever you need to do,” Ning instructed. “Just keep cooperating with the Fogstone Army. If there’s nothing urgent, no need to come speak to me.”

“Understood.” “Understood.”

Both Whitehorn and Bloodsea assented respectfully.

“You may leave,” Ning said. Only then did the two depart.

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“He let us leave, just like that?” Elder God Bloodsea murmured in a soft voice, “Whitehorn, I thought we’d have to offer him some of our treasures. I even prepared mine already.”

“I know, right? This Sentinel is a general; he definitely has very high standards. I was really worried about this. I never would’ve thought he’d let us leave, just like that.” The black-robed Ancestral Immortal let out a sigh of relief as well. “It sounds like he doesn’t really want us to bother him unless there’s something urgent. It seems as though this one really isn’t planning on extorting treasures out of us.”

“Right.” Bloodsea felt jubilant as well.

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“General, all you had to do was say the word and they would’ve offered up their treasures like good little boys.” Elder God Mountain Eater grinned at Ning. “Managing a place like the Windsource Chaosworld is a wonderful assignment. Not just any Elder God will be assigned here.”

Ning shook his head. Given how powerful he now was, why would he need to extort his subordinates?

Ning turned his head to stare at the distant Eastcalm Mountains. For a long period of time, perhaps ten thousand years or even longer, he would

be living in this place.

# Chapter 15: Adventurers

The day after Ji Ning arrived at the Windsourc Chaosworld.

Ning alighted upon an ordinary-looking planet in the midst of the primordial chaos.

“This planet is perfectly ordinary. There are trillions of planets like this one in the primordial chaos.” Ning nodded slowly. “Ordinary is perfect. I’ll put the prisonworld right here.”

Ning waved his hand, causing a stone stele to sink down into an unfathomably deep crevice. It fell tens of thousands of kilometers, then sank deep within a dark underground river that carried it deeper into the earth.

He was going to adventure through the Badlands Territory and perhaps even leave it one day. Something dangerous might happen. He had to have a backup plan that would ensure that he would have the chance to recover! The backup clone for his true body would remain here. Even if he lost his true body, his clone would be able to eventually recover and rebuild.

“However, according to the legends, there are some terrifyingly powerful secret arts that can simultaneously slay all of a person’s clones at once.” Ning was still quite wary.

The lifeblood oath was one example. If one violated a lifeblood oath, one’s true body, Primaltwin, and clones would all be devoured and killed by it! This was because the true body and the Primaltwin were linked together in a very special manner that the lifeblood oath could access.

In the endless primordial chaos, there were supposedly certain terrifying figures who could use special secret arts to achieve the exact same effect, killing all the clones belonging to one’s true body or Primaltwin! It didn’t matter how many clones you had; you would still die! This, too, was part of the information which World God Northrest had left behind for Ning. However, these powerful secret arts were extremely difficult to train in and also incredibly rare. Less than one in ten thousand World-level

experts was capable of such a technique.

As for Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals? The vast majority weren't even aware that such techniques existed.

"Even though I'll have a clone here, I still need to be careful," Ning reminded himself.

Swoosh.

Ning flew away from this planet. This planet was quite far away from the Windsource Chaosworld, and Ning had to spend more than half a day before he could finish teleporting back.

The Windsource Chaosworld. The Eastcalm Mountains. The Sunrise Courtyard.

This was a quiet, peaceful, ordinary-looking little courtyard. This was the place where Ning would live.

Whoosh.

A streak of light flew in from afar, alighting within the courtyard. It was Ji Ning, who had just returned from that distant, desolate planet.

"General." A voice rang out from outside the courtyard gates.

Ning glanced towards the gates, then smiled. "Come in."

The gates were pushed open and three goldscale soldiers walked in from outside. These three were all goldscale captains of the Fogstone Army. The leader of the three was Elder God Mountain Eater, who Ning had met the previous day. Next to him was an alluringly beautiful woman who had a bushy, snowy-white tail, and a jade-haired man who emanated a freezing aura.

"General, you headed out early in the morning. These two didn't have a chance to come pay their respects to you," Elder God Mountain Eater said with a smile.

"So these are the other two captains?" Ning looked at the other two.

Mountain Eater quickly made the introductions. "This one here is

Immortal Soulfight.”

“Greetings, General.” The alluring female goldscale captain who had a bushy white tail spoke out, her voice tinged with mesmerizing charm.

“And this is Elder God Tearwell.” Mountain Eater then introduced the icy-looking jade-haired man next to him.

“Greetings, General.” Elder God Tearwell was quite respectful as well.

“The three hundred-plus Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals stationed here at the Windsource Chaosworld are usually divided up into three squads. The three of us are the captains of the squads, with the Starlord having originally assigned me to be the leader.” Mountain Eater continued, “Now that you are here, General, we will of course obey your commands.”

Ning nodded and smiled. “Soulflight, Tearwell, this is our first time meeting each other. In the future, we’ll often be fighting by each other’s sides. Please sit! Let’s chat while sitting down.”

The four seated themselves around a wooden table within the courtyard. Ning waved his hand, causing some fine wine to appear.

“I’m new here and don’t have a good understanding of the situation between our forces and the forces of the Blacklotus Empire. Tell me a bit about the situation,” Ning said.

“General.” Immortal Soulfight’s voice was very pleasing to the ear. “This is a border world. The closest Blacklotus Empire border world would be the Songbug Chaosworld. Sometimes, they’ll ambush us; sometimes, we’ll ambush them. Generally speaking, the battles are kept fairly small-scale. Large scale battles which involve hundreds of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals are very rare.”

“Oh?” Ning nodded slowly.

“Still, they usually ambush us more than we ambush them.” Soulfight shook her head. “We control the Windsource Chaosworld and its Windsource Ruins. Every single unaffiliated Elder God or Ancestral Immortal has to pay us a bottle of chaos nectar if they wish to test their luck. Over the course of a chaos cycle, we will usually collect a cube of

chaos nectar.”

A cube of chaos nectar represented a thousand bottles.

This was a sum that would make any World-level expert turn green with envy.

“That’s why the Blacklotus Empire deeply desires to take over our Windsource Chaosworld and why they launch repeated ambushes against us. However, we’ve long ago set up many layers of formations around the Eastcalm Mountains. This chaosworld is our territory. When they try to ambush us, they usually end up suffering more losses than we do.” Souflight continued, “When all of our Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals join forces, we can hold off even an enemy World God. Thus, the Blacklotus Empire has never been able to do anything to us.”

“Mm.” Ning understood.

The Blacklotus Empire lusted after the Windsource Chaosworld, but they would most likely need to mobilize their World Gods if they wanted to actually take it over. But once their World-level experts made a move, the war would instantly escalate to a dramatically different level.

Fogstone had a long history, deep roots, and more World-level experts.

The Blacklotus Empire didn’t dare to launch a large-scale war against such a powerful organization without a very good reason. That’s why the conflicts between the two were usually contained to the Elder God and Ancestral Immortal level. In truth, these ‘conflicts’ were primarily meant to help train and temper their subordinates, as only through engaging in life-and-death battles would they be able to grow and improve. Almost none of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals stationed here had been alive for more than a chaos cycle. But of course, the Blacklotus Empire probably also hoped that they might eventually get lucky and successfully take over the Windsource Chaosworld.

Ning chatted with three captains for a long period of time, gaining a general understanding of the disposition of the three.

Elder God Mountain Eater looked like a violent hulking brute, but he

was actually a very steady figure. This was probably the reason why the Starlord of Fogstone had ordered the others to follow his lead.

Ancestral Immortal Souflight was a very excitable individual. Each time the conversation turned to warfare and combat, her eyes would gleam with excitement. She was most likely the type that loved to fight.

As for Elder God Tearwell, he was a taciturn man.

Time continued to flow on. More than a hundred years had passed since Ning had arrived at the Windsource Chaosworld.

“Why have you come to the Windsource Chaosworld?” The black-robed Ancestral Immortal appeared within the skies, staring towards a golden-robed man that was sitting within a giant warship.

“Cut the crap. I’m here for the ruins.” The golden-robed man said lazily, “Take your bottle of chaos nectar.”

He tossed out a bottle of chaos nectar. The black-robed Ancestral Immortal caught the bottle and frowned, but remained silent. These cultivators were willing to pay the fee of a bottle of chaos nectar in order to avoid offending Fogstone, but they wouldn’t necessarily be polite about it.

Whoosh.

Space rippled like a curtain. Moments later, Ji Ning appeared.

“Eh?” Ning glanced at the golden-robed man within the large warship.

“Greetings, Sentinel. He’s an adventurer,” the black-robed Ancestral Immortal said.

“Oh.” Ning nodded. This was his first time encountering an outsider during the century he had spent here.

The golden-robed man on the warship glanced sideways at Ning, then muttered softly to himself, “Sentinel? Hmph.” He waved his hand, causing an entire host of Immortals and Fiendgods to appear next to him, all of whom had the auras of either Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals. There had to be over a hundred of them, and all of them were extremely

respectful, addressing the golden-robed man as ‘master’.

“Let’s go.” The golden-robed man seemed quite relaxed.

The great warship flew off into the distance, disappearing in the horizons as it flew towards the ruins.

“He actually has that many retainers?” Ning was surprised.

“He’s a rather famous figure amongst the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who go out adventuring. His name is Elder God Skysouth. He’s a supreme Elder God, but during one of his adventures he lucked into a large trove of treasures. He used those treasures to purchase over a hundred Elder God and Ancestral Immortal slaves.” The black-robed Ancestral Immortal explained, “After buying all those slaves, he then purchased an Elder God Formation! With that formation and with those Elder Gods, he’s able to use his slaves to defend against even a World-level expert for a brief period of time. That’s why he is so arrogant and brash.”

Ning nodded.

Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals enjoyed very long lives. They knew that if they didn’t reach the World-level during their first chaos cycle, they essentially would have no hope of ever reaching that level. Upon realizing that they wouldn’t be able to make any more breakthroughs, many of them would decide to go out ‘adventuring’ and exploring the ruins left behind by ancient powers.

They loved to court death, loved the feeling of adventure. A single successful expedition could result in enormous rewards.

Elder God Skysouth was a classic example. Because of one enormously successful trip, he had ended up being able to purchased over a hundred Elder Gods as well as an Elder God Formation, becoming an often-discussed figure amongst the adventuring cultivators.

“It’s time I pay a visit to the Windsource Ruins myself,” Ning mused to himself. On the first day he had arrived, Ning had acquired a detailed report regarding the Windsource Ruins from the black-robed Ancestral Immortal. The Three Realms was a place that was somewhat lacking in



opportunities, but the Badlands Territory was a place with many legacies left behind by ancient powers.

It had been countless years, but the Windsource Ruins still had yet to be fully investigated. Even World-level experts had died within it. Clearly, the ancient power who had left behind the Windsource Ruins was someone who surpassed World Gods in power.

Given that Ning had a clone located in the prisonworld, Ning definitely had to give this place a good look.

# Chapter 16: Entering the Ruins

Three days later.

“So this is the Windsource Ruins?” Ji Ning stood atop a cloud, staring downwards at the vast world before him. He saw an unfathomably large area that was completely covered by clouds. It must be understood that the Windsource Ruins was once the Immortal estate of that ancient power, and as such it took over nearly half of the space of the entire chaosworld. One could imagine how enormous it was!

“Time to go in.”

Ning flew deep into the cloud-shrouded world.

Whoosh.

He could sense space twisting around him. Suddenly, Ning’s legs went soft. Ning’s face changed and he hurriedly try to fly back up.

Whoosh...

An enormous bloody maw suddenly appeared below him, delivering a fierce chomp towards him. Fortunately, Ning was able to fly quite quickly and thus was able to dodge the bite.

“I was actually teleported straight towards the swamp.” Ning glanced downwards as he continued to fly high up in the air. The region below him was an incredibly vast swamp, and there was a mud-covered beast below him that was staring straight at him. The creature had a savage look in its eyes at it slowly crawled out from the muck, revealing a lizard-like body.

“According to my records on the Windsource Ruins, as soon as you enter you’ll be teleported to the swamp. It doesn’t matter where you enter from; you’ll still be sent straight here. The swamp is filled with countless bugs and beasts, some powerful and some weak. The weak ones might be merely as powerful as a True God, while the most monstrously powerful ones might be as powerful as a World God.” Ning glanced downwards once more at the beast who was now tracking him.

It was normal for powerful cultivators to rear bugbeasts within their

estates.

The ancient power who had build this estate had intentionally created an enormous swamp within it for the sake of rearing certain bugbeasts. In fact, he had established a breeding loop that would ensure that the bugbeasts would continue to kill and eat each other, becoming stronger and stronger without him even needing to worry about them. Thus, even though the estate's owner had died countless years ago, there were still a shocking number of bugbeasts in the swamp.

These bugbeasts were reared for the purpose of becoming the guardians and protectors of the estate. Thus, all outside invaders would suffer attacks from these bugbeasts.

Growl...

The lizard-shaped creature opened its mouth even wider as it suddenly soared into the skies, its body coiling upwards for many hundreds of meters as it 'crawled' upwards through the air.

"Die."

A dazzling streak of sword-light slashed through the bugbeast's army.

Snick! The bugbeast's body was chopped into two halves. Blood sprayed everywhere as it died, and as the blood came crashing back down to the swamp it kicked up a few small muddy waves.

[Brightmoon] sword art, Shadowless stance!

Ning held a Darknorth in his hand, shrinking it from being three thousand meters in length to merely three meters.

"There are way too many bugbeasts in the swamp. I need to get out of here." Ning immediately transformed into a black lightning serpent and began to fly away.

The Windsource Ruins' outermost region was the swamp region. Everyone had to start from the swamp and work their way in if they wished to reach the other regions of the ruins. Even Ning found it difficult to tell north from south after he had entered the ruins. All he could do was

just choose a random direction and begin flying at maximum speed.

“Eh?” Ning could sense some ripples of power from afar. He immediately began to stealthily fly in that direction.

A short while later, Ning was able to see what was happening in the distance. There was a desolate hill off in the distance, and atop the hill coiled a two-headed serpent whose body was more than ten kilometers long. Its head was raised as it stared upwards at an enormous winged scaly monster that was right above it. Both creatures had auras of tremendous power.

“I have the feeling that in raw strength alone, both have reached the World-level of power. Still, they are fairly weak in terms of technique. It’d take me a bit of effort to kill them, but it wouldn’t be too hard.” Ning mused to himself, “I’ll wager these two are two of the bosses of the swamp.”

“GRWAAR!” The two-headed serpent let out a thunderous roar as it suddenly charged upwards.

As for the scaled monster, it plunged downwards as it attacked as well.

The entire swamp seemed to shake. Thankfully, spacetime in the Ruins was incredibly stable; even if World-level experts fought here, they wouldn’t be able to shatter it. If these two creatures were battling in the outside world, they would probably cause entire chaosworlds to shatter in their wake.

“Is that...?” Ning suddenly saw a filthy looking boat appear in the distance. The boat was filled with sabers, swords, suits of armor, pearls, banners, and all sorts of other magic treasures that emanated powerful auras.

“So many treasures? And almost all of them are Chaos treasures!” Ning was delighted.

Over the course of countless years, an equally countless number of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had died in the swamps. The bugbeasts weren’t capable of using the treasures the slain cultivators had left behind,

and so the more powerful ones simply piled them together as spoils of war!

Ning suppressed his aura and bent light around him, making it so that the bugbeasts couldn't see him.

"In order to completely repair Violetjewel, I'll need to acquire an enormous amount of Five Elements essence. I have to get these treasures." Ning immediately came to this decision. "Ideally, these two creatures will kill or maim each other."

Slash!

One of the heads of the two-headed serpent was seized by the sharp claws of the scaly creature, but the other head had managed to latch its maw around the scaly creature's own head. The scaly creature struggled furiously, beating its massive wings and causing waves of mud to kick up around it.

Boom! The scaly creature's head suddenly exploded. Its aura began to grow weak and its struggling wings slowly began to sink downwards.

One of the two-headed serpent's heads had been completely crushed, but its remaining head let out an excited roar.

"GRWAAAR!"

Its roars echoed in the skies.

It then lowered its head, beginning to dine on the flesh of the scaly creature. This was how these bugbeasts lived; they would fight each other and consume each other, constantly growing and transforming. As the serpent continued to feed, its destroyed head began to slowly grow out anew.

Swish!

A figure suddenly drew close to it.

The two-headed serpent was enraged, and its undamaged head immediately turned to stare angrily at the white-robed figure.

Whoosh! Its tail suddenly moved, lashing out lightning-fast towards the

offender.

“Heartsword Realm.”

Boom!

Sword-light flashed. The enormous tail was deflected towards one side, with the sword-light itself stabbing straight towards the one remaining head of the two-headed serpent. The enraged two-headed serpent opened its giant maw, revealing a pair of crystalline fangs that glistened with translucent venom.

Swish! The venom shot out from its fangs as fast as lightning.

Slash! The sword-light blurred, easily deflecting the stream of venom.

Stab! The sword-light pierced straight through the two-headed serpent's head. The serpent's body trembled, then slowly began to turn limp. As it fell down into the swamp, it caused the surrounding mud to tremble violently.

[Brightmoon] sword-art, Blood Drop stance!

“Thankfully, this bugbeast had already been heavily injured and had less than a third of its maximum power. Otherwise, killing it wouldn't have been so easy.” A look of delight was on Ning's face. The most dangerous aspect to killing a bugbeast was the possibility of the bugbeast summoning its kin! Once a bugbeast encountered a powerful invader that it couldn't defeat, it would often let out a loud cry to summon more of its ilk.

Thankfully, the two-headed serpent had been heavily injured and Ning had been very fast. Ning hadn't brought Violetjewel with him on this excursion to the Windsource Ruins, as that was his most important treasure. If he died within the Ruins...losing the other treasures didn't matter, but losing Violetjewel would be a tremendous blow. It simply wasn't worth the risk.

Violetjewel was a sword which even World Gods and Chaos Immortals would go crazy over. So long as Ning had enough Five Elements essence, he would be able to reforge Violetjewel and allow it to reveal its true

power.

“The treasures.” Ning immediately shot towards the distant hill. Next to that hill was the large, muddy boat that was filled with treasures. Those were the many treasures which the two-headed serpent had acquired over the years. Some had come from slain cultivators while some had come from slain bugbeasts.

“Twenty-one Chaos treasures. Perhaps the storage treasures will also have fine items within them.” Ning swept through the treasures with his heartforce, then waved his hand and collected the entire boat.

Swish!

Suddenly, a streak of light flew towards Ning from afar.

Ning turned his head to look.

“Well, well. Isn’t this our Sentinel? Ahaha! Hand over those treasures and I’ll spare your life.” A golden-robed man was standing atop the warship, and an entire host of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals stood behind him.

“Elder God Skysouth?” Ning frowned.

Elder God Skysouth had over a hundred Elder God and Ancestral Immortal slaves, while Ning had left Violetjewel behind. Dealing with him would be a bit tricky.

In the Ruins, only part of the dangers came from the traps and defenses left behind by that ancient power. The other part came from the cultivators who might strike out at you out of greed!

“Hand over the treasures!” Elder God Skysouth’s face turned cold as he stood there at the front of his boat. “Otherwise, die!”

“Elder God Skysouth. I don’t wish to become enemies with you. The Windsource Ruins is a large place. There’s no need for us to fight to the death over these treasures,” Ning said.

“Fight to the death with you? You?” Elder God Skysouth finally ran out of patience. He barked coldly, “Kill him.”

# Chapter 17: Danger Zone

As Elder God Skysouth issued the order, all of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals under his command immediately began to attack.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Six streaks of light that moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos charged straight for Ji Ning.

“Flee.” Ning didn’t hesitate at all, immediately using the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] to evade.

“Chase!” All of the Elder Gods charged straight after Ning.

Ning was powerful, but when a hundred Elder Gods joined together into an Elder God Formation, they would be able to hold off even a real World God for a period of time. If Ning was surrounded by them, he would be unable to escape! They would slowly grind him down, exhausting his reserve of divine power and Immortal energy. Ning absolutely would not permit himself to be surrounded.

“You won’t be able to escape.” Elder God Skysouth laughed coldly. He had spent quite a lot of money to purchase those two Ancestral Immortals who were capable of controlling magic treasures faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. They were generally responsible for briefly tying down opponents, giving the rest of the Elder Gods enough time to charge forward and trap them.

These slaves made it so that Elder God Skysouth was virtually invincible to anyone below the World level of power!

The six streaks of light chasing after Ning were six long shuttles. They clearly moved even more quickly than Ning, and they soon intercepted him and moved to block him.

“F\*ck off.” Ning unleashed his full power, using [Three Heads, Six Arms] and wielding six swords simultaneously.

“Heartsword Realm!”

The six swords struck out simultaneously!



The [Starseizing Hand] was unleashed as well!

After spending a hundred years training while living in the Windsorce Chaosworld, Ning had improved his sword-arts even more, resulting in his strikes containing even greater power.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

The six long shuttles were all smashed away. Although Ning slightly slowed down for a brief instant, in the next instant he immediately regained his normal speed and continued to flee.

“What?” Elder God Skysouth had been watching lazily from atop his warship, but in this instant his face completely changed. “Those two Ancestral Immortals are able to attack faster than the speed of light using their treasures. He was able to instantly defeat them?”

The clash was simply too brief. It was as though those six shuttles had instantly been knocked away as soon as Ning had struck them...and thanks to his half-step World God body and the [Starseizing Hand], Ning was able to send them flying a very long distance.

Whoooooosh.

The hundred-plus Elder Gods were much slower by comparison. They were only able to watch helplessly as the white-robed youth continued to pull further and further away from them before finally disappearing into the horizons.

“Hmph.” Elder God Skysouth frowned, then let out a cold snort. “Fine. You run fast. For your sake, you’d best hope you can keep running that fast the next time I see you.”

“Let’s go,” he ordered calmly.

“Yes.” The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all returned to the warship, which then quickly departed the scene as well.

.....

Ning glanced backwards, then let out a sigh of relief.

“In the future, I’ll need to get a few Elder God and Ancestral Immortal

servants of my own,” Ning muttered to himself. There was a great difference in power between Elder Gods and World Gods, but sometimes quantity could make up for quality! When a hundred Elder Gods joined together into an Elder God Formation, they would be able to withstand even a true World God for an extended period of time. If a thousand of them joined together into an Elder God Formation, they might very well be capable of killing some of the weaker World Gods!

However, it wouldn't be so easy for someone to acquire a thousand Elder Gods. The entire Fogstone Army only held a few thousand Elder Gods and first-tier Ancestral Immortals!

In addition, the cost of a thousand-man Elder God Formation would be even higher than the cost of a thousand Elder Gods! Without the formation, the Elder Gods would be nothing more than a pile of loose sand. Only through usage of an Elder God Formation would they be able to join together into a perfect whole.

“Time to go.”

Ning continued to fly forwards at high speed.

Given how strong Ning was, the swamp region of the Ruins didn't pose much of a threat. So long as he was careful and stayed far away from any powerful auras he sensed, he would be fairly safe.

“Ah, there it is.” Ning saw a chain of mountains appear off in the distance. “I've reached another part of the Ruins.”

“The intelligence report I received regarding the Windsource Ruins is now essentially useless.”

Ning was slightly worried. The swamp was the outermost layer and also the ‘safest’ region.

The other regions were controlled by the restrictive formation spells of the Ruins and would often change and transform. A place might be perfectly safe one day but transform into a death trap the next day. That was why his intelligence report was now of no use.

Whoosh.

Ning landed atop a mountain peak. Even he no longer dared to rashly fly about any longer, for fear of accidentally flying into a death trap.

“Eh?” As Ning jogged forward, he suddenly turned his head to look off into the distance.

A red-robed woman was seated in the lotus position at the top of a mountain peak. The woman’s face was delicate and beautiful, with eyes as gentle as the waters of autumn. She was surrounded by hundreds of crescent blades that were wreathed by fire, causing flames to billow out all around her.

“What a beautiful woman.” Ning had very high standards, but even he couldn’t help but let out a sigh of praise. “Beauty like this could cause the collapse of an empire.”

After glancing at her, Ning continued to jog forwards, instantly traversing ten thousand kilometers with each movement.

The red-robed woman had noticed Ning as well. She couldn’t help but murmur softly to herself, “How odd. The [Libertine Dream] technique I devised carries an aura of natural charm which is far superior to those more blatant, forceful charm spells. And yet, he didn’t even pause to say a word to me? Hasn’t he heard of me, the Flamefairy?” 1

Su Youji, the Flamefairy, was quite a famous figure amongst the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals of the Badlands Territory.

“And why is he running so quickly in a place as dangerous as this?” The fiery-robed woman mumbled to herself, “I’ve always felt that I’m pretty crazy, but he’s even crazier than me. If he keeps running around that fast, he’ll probably explore more of this place in one year than I would in ten thousand. Still, he’ll die faster than me as well. I hope you are lucky enough to survive...it’s rare for me to take a liking to someone.”

The swamp was the outermost region. After exiting the swamps, one would enter the truly dangerous regions. Generally speaking, most people would advance very carefully through these regions and move at a glacially slow pace.

However, given that the Windsource Ruins took up fully half of the Windsource Chaosworld, it truly was incredibly vast. If you moved through it slowly, you could spend a million years and still just explore a tiny part of it. Still, since Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals generally had very long lifespans, they wouldn't be in a rush. Safety first!

Ning, however, was different.

Not only did he have a clone in the outside world, he also had mastered the 'Heartsword Realm' technique and had tremendous control over his surroundings. His skill empowered his boldness. In addition, he only trained for a relatively brief period of time; how could he possibly be willing to spend a few hundred thousand years here? He was planning to adventure through this place for a few years at most, then leave. Of course he had to move quickly!

"Eh?" Ning's eyes lit up as he saw a corpse off in the distance.

"Get in here." He flung out a Protocosmic spirit-rope, looping it over that corpse and pulling it into his estate-treasure.

The corpse would have to be destroyed, but the treasures Ning would keep.

"Keep going." Ning was in an excellent mood. One would often encounter the corpses and skeletons of fallen cultivators in this place...but of course, if one wasn't careful, one might easily end up joining.

The place was simply too large.

Ning spent more than a year traveling through the Ruins. Thanks to the keen senses provided by the 'Heartsword Realm', the protection provided by the Goldstar Beads of the Heavens, and the investigative power of his heartforce, he was able to avoid all of the most dangerous areas. Aside from Elder God Skysouth and the Flamefairy, he encountered six more cultivators. However, only one of the six tried to assault Ning; the rest steered clear of him.

As for the one who tried to attack Ning? Ning killed him, of course!

Whoosh.

Ning was jogging through a mountain forest, sometimes moving fast and sometimes moving slow. He moved at quite a unique rhythm; clearly, Ning had gotten used to this place.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Waves of power were rippling out from afar.

“Eh?” Ning’s eyes lit up. “Those waves are pretty powerful, and it seems there are quite a few of them. Let’s go take a look.” Generally speaking, when multiple people fought against each other in a dangerous region like the one he was located in right now, it was over an extremely important treasure.

Swoosh.

Ning quickly and silently moved closer to the source of the ripples, soon arriving at a mountain peak. Ning hid within the grass, peering off into the distance. Within the distant mountain gorge, he saw five Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals engaged in a battle. The five were divided into two sides, with four cultivators on one side and one cultivator on the other.

“Hellsword, there are two of these Dao weapons. Why can’t we split them? One for you, one for us. Isn’t that ideal?”

“A Dao weapon for you four fools? Die, die, die!” The lone cultivator was dressed in black robes, and his six arms were striking with six blurry streaks of sword-light. As for the other four cultivators, they were able to just barely hold him off as they supported each other.

Upon hearing these words, Ning’s eyes lit up. “Dao weapons? Two of them? Elder God Hellsword....mm, so that’s the legendary Hellsword. He truly is an expert of the Dao of the Sword. He should be on the same level of power as me.”

\*

1. Su Youji is an interesting name. All three characters, Su, You, and Ji are actually surnames in Chinese as well.



# Chapter 18: Battling Within the Ruins

“All of you, die!” Hellsword exploded with power as he wildly assaulted the other four. He knew that if this battle went on for too long other, Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals in the Windsorce Ruins might be drawn to this place.

“I can’t hold any longer.”

A muscular Elder God who wielded six black staffs let out a low growl. Hellsword’s sword-light landed against his body, but only created a few sparks.

“Be careful.”

“Retreat.”

A blood-robed Elder God who had been fighting Hellsword in close combat suddenly blanched, then hurriedly split his body into two and sent his two clones fleeing in two separate directions.

Slash!

A streak of sword-light fell down upon one of the clones, slaying it.

“My divine body’s been weakened. I won’t be able to hold on for any longer.” The blood-robed Elder God continued to flee at high speed. The other three Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals cursed, but had no choice but to begin fleeing in other directions as well. They weren’t actually members of a team; they had simply joined together on an ad-hoc basis simply because Hellsword was far too powerful.

“Hmph. Those fools.” Hellsword came to a halt, grinning as he looked at the four fleeing figures.

“Eh?” Hellsword’s face suddenly changed dramatically as he immediately turned his head.

An icy ray of sword-light had suddenly appeared and was stabbing straight towards him.

“So there was one more hiding in the weeds.” Hellsword let out a savage

grin, striking out mercilessly with his six swords. He wasn't worried about the enemy attack at all; although it was quite fast, it was too simple and straightforward a strike.

BOOM!!!!

The opposing streaks of sword-light collided.

Hellsword was sent flying backwards, his face a mask of astonishment. As for the white-robed Ji Ning, he chased right after Hellsword.

[Brightmoon] sword-art, Blood Drop stance!

"What tremendous strength." Hellsword was completely stunned. His opponent wasn't just stronger, he was overwhelmingly stronger!

"But raw strength is useless against me." He suddenly came to a halt, spun around, then charged straight towards Ning.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash!

Streaks of sword-light filled the air between the two, then both fell back.

Hellsword stared at Ning, then said in a low voice, "Who are you? Someone with such powerful sword-arts can't possibly be an unknown figure."

"Sunrise," Ning said calmly.

"You must be a new expert in the Dao of the Sword," Hellsword said coldly. "You are pretty strong. However, the Ruins aren't a suitable place for sparring. Let's compete after we leave this place." After speaking, Hellsword transformed into a streak of black light, moving at light speed as he fled.

When the two had clashed, he had the feeling that Ning's sword-arts were simply perfect. He couldn't find any flaws at all, and so he decided to avoid wasting more time with such a troublesome opponent.

"Leaving?" Ning willed his swords to fly out.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Nine streaks of sword-light shot out through the skies. These nine



swords were all Chaos treasures that Ning had acquired in the Windsource Ruins. Although they weren't part of a set, Ning's Ancestral Immortal power filled them, ensuring that each of them possessed shocking levels of power. They spread out like a layered net, completely surrounding and blocking Hellsword's path.

All nine swords moved faster than the speed of light and were thus able to quickly catch up to Hellsword.

"Damn." Hellsword blanched as he stared at the nine swords surrounding him. "Where the hell did such a powerful expert of the sword come from? His sword-arts are completely flawless. Damn it all."

He would rather fight against an enemy with ferocious offensive stances than someone like Ning, whose sword-arts could be described as truly flawless. One could easily succumb to a sense of despair when faced with such impeccable sword-arts.

The nine streaks of sword-light swirled around him, preventing him from fleeing any further.

"You won't be able to escape." Ning had already manifested three heads and six arms. He wielded six of his Darknorth swords as he charged straight towards Hellsword.

"Then let's fight!" Hellsword went berserk as well, his eyes filled with bloodlust as he once more threw himself against Ning.

Neither would be willing to retreat. Two Dao weapons were at stake!

Dao weapons were incredibly rare, even amongst the other experts on their level. Every single Dao weapon was worth at least a cube of chaos nectar, with the best Dao weapons being worth more than ten! This was a sum of money that even World Gods would lust after. It was only natural that both Ji Ning and Hellsword went berserk over the two Dao weapons.

"If I get those two Dao weapons, I might be able to extract enough Five Elements essence to completely repair Violetjewel!" Ning's killing intent began to soar.

"What's going on?"

The four fleeing Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals could sense powerful ripples emanating from behind them. “Who is Hellsword fighting against now?”

The four of them carefully began to creep backwards. The allure of a pair of Dao weapons was simply too great!

“Eh?”

“Who is that?”

After sneaking back, they saw a white-robed figure battling furious against a black-robed figure.

The black-robed figure was the famous, highly regarded ‘Hellsword’.

The white-robed figure was an unknown youth.

“What? Hellsword is actually at a disadvantage?” The four were all shocked. “Where did such an expert of the sword suddenly come from? He’s so strong!”

“Brother Xiuyi, what should we do?”

“What can we do? Stay far away from them and watch. If both are heavily injured, we can try to seize the opportunity to attack them. If no chance presents itself, then we’ll immediately run away after their battle concludes.”

“Brother Xiuyi’s words are reasonable.”

“This white-robed Elder God is even more terrifying than Hellsword.”

Ning and Hellsword both suspected that those four had returned to watch them, but neither really cared about the four. Four supreme Elder Gods? Pffft. It might take them a bit of effort to kill the four, but it wouldn’t be too hard. Ning’s ‘Heartsword stance’ in particular ensured that he didn’t have to worry about group attacks at all.

The two continued to focus on battling each other.

Ning’s sword attacks seemed to be more casual and carefree, but they came in consecutive linked waves that made Hellsword feel as though he

had no chance to even breathe.

Hellsword's attacks were more frenzied and they were filled with a thick intent of darkness.

Clang!

Sword-light flashed. Finally, a blow landed upon Hellsword's body. Ning felt as though he had just stabbed an extremely tough magic treasure. The power of the blow caused Hellsword to be knocked flying backwards, and he slammed into a distant boulder, causing it to break apart into tiny pieces that shot out in every direction.

"A protective divine ability?" Ning frowned slightly. "It seems as though I'll have to suppress and seal him."

"What!?" Upon Ning landed a blow against him, Hellsword's face changed yet again. Clearly, his sword-arts were somewhat inferior.

"If I can't overcome you in sword-arts..."

Hellsword gritted his teeth, then manifested an enormous violet hammer that emanated mighty ripples of power.

"A Dao weapon?" Ning immediately understood. So one of the two weapons which Hellsword had acquired was a warhammer. No wonder he hadn't used it during this battle! Using sword-arts with a warhammer wasn't really effective.

However...the difference in power between the two was obvious. Hellsword had no choice but to change the way he fought.

"Die!" Hellsword brandished the violet warhammer, then struck out with it.

Rumble...

As the warhammer struck out, streaks of lightning could be seen crackling around it. It compressed space in front of it as it smashed straight towards Ning.

"What tremendous might." Ning could instantly sense how much power this strike held. He hurriedly willed his Darknorth swords to transform

into black holes that he then used to defend.

Whoosh!

The warhammer was deflected off to one side, while Ning was knocked a few steps back.

“I knew it.” Hellsword had an ugly look on his face. This white-robed youth was ridiculously strong. Even though Hellsword had an advantage in weaponry, the white-robed youth was still able to defend against it with his techniques.

“A big warhammer like this must have lots of Five Elements essence inside of it.” Ning now wanted the weapon even more.

“There’s a total of two warhammers. You can have one, I’ll keep the other. Deal?” As Hellsword continued to battle, he began to send Ning a mental message. He was willing to compromise. There was nothing he could use against Ji Ning’s terrifying sword-arts, and he knew that he would definitely be defeated if this battle was to continue for much longer. This white-robed youth was also skilled in long-range attacks; there was no way he would be able to escape.

“Give me both and I’ll let you off the hook,” Ning sent back.

“Don’t even think about it.” Hellsword was beginning to go crazy.

“Then let’s keep fighting.”

Ning charged forward even more furiously than before, sending sword-light flashing everywhere. He even manifested a rope next to him, filling it with some of his will. If Ning was able to break through Hellsword’s defenses and catch him offguard, he would use this rope to bind and capture him.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Hellsword battled on the run, and while doing so he sent furiously to Ning, “This place is the Windsourc Ruins. You never know when danger is going to appear here. If you keep chasing after me like this, you’ll end up in a death trap as well.”

Ning just continued with his furious attacks.

The four Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals watching from afar felt breathless.

“Both of them are crazy.”

“Hopefully, both of them will be killed by traps or protective formations, letting us pick up their treasures.” The four watched, prayed, and chased after the the Hellsword and the white-robed cultivator as those two continued their wild fight.

Boom!

Just as Ning clashed once more against Hellsword in midair...

Suddenly, a gray gust of wind suddenly appeared out of nowhere, spinning into a tornado and instantly whirling around both Ning and Hellsword. A few moments later, the tornado vanished...but with it vanished Ning and Hellsword as well.

When the four saw this from afar, their faces all changed.

“Everyone knows that the Windsource Ruins are too dangerous to fly through. You might end up being trapped inside some formation. Those two must’ve been teleported straight into a death trap.”

“Damn. Those two Dao weapons were swept away as well.”

Unwilling to just give up, the four of them continued to wait there for three full days, but they saw neither hide nor hair of Ji Ning and Hellsword, to say nothing of the Dao weapons. In the end, they had no choice but to leave unhappily.

# Chapter 19: A Gray Wind

“Not good.” Ji Ning’s face immediately changed as that gray wind appeared, bringing with it an aura of death and stillness.

Hellsword had been driven by Ning to the brink of madness, which was why he had started to fly around in a crazed manner.

The difference in power between the two wasn’t that great, which was why Ning needed time to subdue and capture him. Ning had thought that he wouldn’t be so unlucky as to run into a protective spell during such a short battle...but alas, he really was.

Boom!

The gray wind swept both Ning and Hellsword into its grasp, and its utterly indomitable power threw the two of them flying downwards.

“What incredible power.” Ning did his best to halt his fall, but his divine power and Immortal energy were far too weak to do so.

Whooooosh.

There was an utterly enormous black pit beneath them.

Ning and Hellsword were both spun around like tops by the tornado and sent flying straight into the pit.

“Stop. Stop!” Ning instantly activated his [Three Heads, Six Arms] ability. All six of his arms dramatically increased in size as he clawed towards the edges of the pit. In midair, Ning had nothing to hold onto. Now, however, he was able to see the stone cliffs lining the edges of the pit. Ning had the feeling that if he was drawn deep into this pit by the tornado, he would probably end up dead.

He had to come to a halt! But the wind was simply too powerful.

Ning’s six arms simultaneously activated the [Starseizing Hand]. In the end, one of his hands managed to just barely clench around a pillar of rock.

Bang! Ning had been dragged down at an incredible pace. When his

hand clenched around the stone pillar, his entire body came to a sudden halt. A terrifying ripping power was applied throughout his entire body, causing it to twitch. As for his hands that were using the [Starseizing Hand], they instantly went numb and slack...resulting in Ning continuing to be dragged downwards by that furious gray tornado!

Crack! Crack! Crack! The gray stone pillar that Ning had managed to grab onto earlier began to crack apart as well. Moments later, it completely shattered and was also dragged downwards by the furious tornado.

“Gotta stop.”

“Stop.”

“Stop!” Ning’s six arms wildly clutched at the surrounding walls, seeking to grasp anything that jutted out.

Rumble...

Ning finally came to a halt when three of his hands managed to simultaneously snake their way into an enormous crevice in the pit walls. Thanks to these three hands holding onto that crevice desperately, he was finally able to resist the power of the tornado.

“Whew. I stopped.” Ning let out a sigh of relief. The enormous stone crevice was thousands of meters long, and as Ning latched onto the crevice he had changed his arms to make them hundreds of meters long as well. He had dug his hands deep into the crevice, ensuring that he would be able to hang off the walls.

“No!”

Hellsword had also been dragged into the pit, and he was also clawing at the walls in an attempt to find something to hold onto. However, he was far weaker than Ning in raw strength. He managed to grab onto a jutting piece of rock, but the tearing force instantly rendered his hands completely numb and slack. He wasn’t able to slow himself down! The power of the tornado was simply too great, giving him no chance to grab onto anything.

Ning's hands were akin to Chaos treasures, after all. He also had the power of a half-step World God body, as well as the enhancement of the [Starseizing Hand]. That was the only reason why Ning was more successful than him in coming to a halt.

Bang! As Hellsword continued to be dragged downwards, his body would occasionally smash into some jutting pieces of rock, resulting in him bouncing around the walls.

Bang!

Hellsword vomited out a mouthful of blood. These collisions were even more deadly than Ning's sword-strikes, and he continued to smash into one jutting rock after another. Given how keen Ning's eyesight was, he was able to clearly see Hellsword continuing to fall several hundred kilometers, smashing into the walls at least a few dozen times. It seemed as though the deeper Hellsword fell, the more powerful the tornado became. Hellsword's body was beginning to twist and contort from the collisions.

Boom!

After smashing into a particularly sharp spear-shaped rock, Hellsword's body actually completely blasted apart. The powerful tornado quickly ground the pieces of his body apart, completely wiping him out in body and soul. The tornado was far stronger than Ning, after all!

"A pity." Still hanging off the stone walls, Ning could do nothing but watch as Hellsword died.

"The Dao weapons were sucked down as well."

"But...what should I do?"

All six of Ning's arms were clinging onto the stone crevice. He was wearing a top-grade suit of Chaos armor, and he had a powerful divine body that had trained the [Golden Statue]. He was more than capable of withstanding the power of this tornado.

"Am I supposed to just keep hanging here?" Ning spread out his heartforce, but alas it was instantly destroyed by that gray wind of



destruction.

“This gray wind is capable of destroying even heartforce! How terrifying was this ancient power that erected the Windsource Ruins!?” Ning muttered softly to himself.

Ning had no idea. The strongest figure of the Badlands Territory, Daoking Badlands, had once paid a visit to the former master of this estate...and he had been thoroughly convinced of his inferiority. In fact, the reason why this place was named ‘Windsource’ was because that ancient power had reached an utterly unfathomable level of mastery over the wind.

Neither heartforce nor coresense could penetrate the gray wind. All Ning could do was use his own eyes.

“I have to get out of here.” Ning raised his head to look upwards. The gray wind howled furiously above him, blocking his vision. Ning used his top-grade Chaos armor to form a semi-translucent barrier over his head; only then was he able to see just a little bit of the area above him.

“I have to get out of this pit. The wind is too powerful; I won’t be able to maintain a grip on any jutting pieces of rock. My only choice is to drive my entire arm deep into some of those crevices and cracks.” Ning scanned the area above him for more crevices. The gray wind had caused quite a bit of erosion to this pit, resulting in quite a few crevices appearing.

“There’s one.” Three hundreds above Ning was a slightly smaller crevice.

“Let’s go.” Ning immediately stretched one of his hands upwards.

Whoooooosh.

The furious power of the wind blasted down against Ning’s hand with the weight of a thousand stars, completely preventing him from reaching upwards. Ning did his best to fight back against it, and he found that he was able to stretch his arms out in various other directions...but to go completely against the win and reach upwards? Completely impossible.

“Won’t work. Wind’s too strong.” Ning quickly gave up the attempt.

“If I can’t go up...”

Ning lowered his head to stare at the seemingly bottomless black pit beneath him. “Then my only choice is to go down!”

Ning looked downwards carefully. Roughly six hundred meters below him, he saw another large crevice. He immediately stretched out with a hand to grab a hold of it.

Going up meant going against the wind.

Going down meant going with the wind.

When he increased his arm to make it many hundreds of meters long, it was easy for him to snake his hand deep into the crevice. Ning sent one hand after another into the second crevice before finally letting go of the first one.

Whoosh!

Ning quickly fell downwards, then came to a halt.

“Let’s continue.” Ning glanced at his surroundings, then began to climb downwards again.

And so, Ning began to slowly make his way down through this bottomless pit of darkness.

A while later, Ning saw a sword that was jutting out from a stone pillar.

“This sword wasn’t one of Hellsword’s. Some other poor bastard must’ve been dragged in here and lost control of his weapon, resulting in it being stuck here.” Ning immediately, laboriously reached out to grab that sword, then took it into his estate.

Ning then continued his slow downwards climb.

Three hundred meters. Three thousand meters. Thirty kilometers...

By now, Ning had picked up a total of three weapons. Alas, all three were ‘merely’ Chaos treasures; none of them were Dao weapons. Still, it made sense. If a World-level expert was grabbed by the gray wind, he wouldn’t have been manhandled as badly as Ning and Hellsword had been. There

were very few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who held Dao weapons; the chances of one of them just happening to fall down into this pit were even lower.

Ning slowly clambered down over another hundred kilometers, then took a rest and glanced at his surroundings in the hopes of finding a way out of here.

“What’s that?” Ning look downwards, surprised.

A cave had actually appeared on the walls of the pit. This was clearly a cave that had been artificially dug out, and it was many hundreds of meters wide. Although the gray wind howled past it, it didn’t go into the cave itself, making the cave a rare and welcome oasis of peace.

Because it sloped downwards and inwards, Ning wasn’t able to see it earlier. Only now, when he drew closer, did it appear before him.

“Who dug out this cave? Doesn’t matter, I suppose. I’ve used up quite a bit of my divine power after climbing so long and keeping [Three Heads, Six Arms] active for so long. I need to get in there right away.”

Ning hurriedly began to climb in its direction, then sent his arms deep into the cave entrance. There were a few jutting pieces of rock inside the cave, allowing Ning to easily gain a handhold.

Ning quickly ‘shrank’ his arms, resulting in the rest of his body being pulled into the cave like a rubber band.

“I’m in.”

It was strange. There was no wind in this cave at all. Ning had gotten so used to the raging gray winds that he felt rather unaccustomed to the calm.

“Whew. I can finally take a break.” Ning deactivated [Three Heads, Six Arms], then glanced at the gray wind which continued to rage outside of the cave. He then turned his head to carefully inspect the cave itself.

# Chapter 20: The Nine Seals

It was extremely obvious that this cave had been dug out artificially. It had been dug out in an extremely methodical manner, and various markings that looked like fish scales could be seen on the walls. There were also some diagrams and some writing that had been left behind on the cave walls, and the cave itself emanated a strange intent that felt like flowing water. Ji Ning couldn't help but be affected by the cave's aura, and his heart became quite calm as well.

Ning was in no rush to read the words or look at the pictures. Instead, he first carefully inspected the scale-like patterns and marks on the walls.

“Very neat.”

“If someone slowly dug the cave out, there's no way it could all be so neat and tiny.” Ning stared at the tiny markings. “I feel as though someone must've used a divine ability to instantly scoop out the rock and make the cave.”

Ning couldn't help but feel shocked by this possibility.

When he had grabbed onto that stone pillar a short while ago, the powerful tearing force from the tornado had only been able to cause a few cracks to it. He had tested out using his hands to 'dig' a handhold into the walls, but had been completely unable to succeed whatsoever. This was why Ning had chosen to find pre-existing crevices instead.

“The stone here has been nourished by the local formations and baptized by the gray wind, giving it extraordinary properties. Most likely, not even World-level experts would be able to so easily dig out a cave of such size,” Ning mused to himself. He reached out with his hand, gently stroking it against the fish-scale patterns.

As he did, he suddenly could sense a strange, unique intent pouring towards him from the patterns.

“As calm...as water...”

Ning carefully inspected the cave in detail for a while longer, then

turned his attention towards the writing and the diagrams on the cave walls. As Ning viewed it, those diagrams wouldn't exactly be running away. If he wasn't careful and missed something or activated a trap by accident, that would be truly disastrous.

The 'Hundred Streams of the Windsource' in these ruins are quite marvelous indeed. A pity...I would've loved to have had the chance to sit down and discuss the Dao with the fellow Daoist who created this estate. That fellow Daoist died countless years ago. In the future, when I reach the end of my own life, I shall also leave behind my Dao and allow the cultivators who come after me to get a good look at it...

I have spent more than a hundred thousand years here and have gained certain insights. Although I've only inspected a few of the streams, I can tell that there is a great difference between them and the path which I have chosen, and so it doesn't matter if I look at the rest of the Hundred Streams or not...

Here are the insights I have gained from a hundred thousand years of viewing these streams. I've recorded all of them down here. If a cultivator has the chance to come here in the future and see them, consider this a bit of karma between us.

These are the words of Waterwind!

Every single character emanated a relaxed, carefree aura.

When Ning looked at these words, he felt as though he could see that ancient power writing them down all those years ago.

"Waterwind?" Ning murmured softly to himself, "Who is that? Judging from what he wrote, he should be someone who was on the same level of power as the creator of the Windsource Ruins."

The Badlands Territory...as far as Ning knew, it didn't hold anyone by the name of 'Waterwind'.

Ning had long ago acquired intelligence reports regarding the many World-level experts. The most powerful figure in the entire Badlands was the creator of the Badlands Court, Daolord Badlands! Daolord Badlands

was still alive and was unfathomably powerful; he wasn't a person who someone of Ning's level could hope to approach.

Daolord Badlands had established the Badlands Court. World-level experts were like toddlers before him.

"The Badlands Court holds a number of very famous figure, but none of them go by the moniker of 'Waterwind'," Ning mused to himself. "No, I've never heard this name before. Could it be...someone from another territory?"

Still, in the end it didn't really matter.

Waterwind talked a big game. If he was telling the truth, then he was most likely someone above the World-level of power! Even if he was 'merely' a World-level expert, he most assuredly stood at the very peak of power amongst them.

"Waterwind...Waterwind..." Ning quietly memorized this name, then turned his attention to the 'insights' which Waterwind had left behind on the cave walls.

The cave walls were covered with both writing and diagrams.

The writing consisted of the words Ning had read just now.

As for the diagrams, they contained the insights which Waterwind had gained.

The diagram was of fishes swimming in the sea. Ning saw more than ten fishes, each of which was in a different pose. Around them could be seen several ordinary-looking lines which seemed to represent the ripples of the water.

There were a total of sixteen fish and ninety-seven water ripples.

"These diagrams...?" Ning felt that these diagrams were rather odd. He gave them a closer look, carefully inspecting the water ripples and the fish for any peculiarities.

Whoooooosh.

Slowly, without Ning even noticing it, a surge of will and intent began to

slowly seep outwards from the diagrams and towards Ning.

Rumble...

A vast river that was three thousand meters wide was flowing past Ning, and in the river was a fish of gigantic proportions. The river was merely three thousand meters wide, but this fish was over three hundred meters long. The fish swam with the waves, continuing to advance forward with an indomitable, unstoppable attitude.

“What the hell?” Ning stared blankly at his surroundings.

Directly him was a river that was three thousand meters wide. There were several other rivers next to it, each of which was three thousand meters wide and which flowed with tremendous speed. Off in the distance, Ning could see even more rivers, but he wasn't able to get a clear glimpse of them.

Although Ning wasn't able to see those rivers clearly, he could vaguely sense that there was a total of a hundred river streams.

A hundred rivers. A hundred fish.

The rivers flowed in one direction. The fish swam in the same direction.

At the very end of the rivers, there was a place where all of them came together, a place of unstoppable power which saw the hundred streams become one.

Every single river gave Ning a different feeling, as did the fish within it.

Some of the rivers felt like the pretty girls next door.

Some of the rivers felt like scorchingly attractive vixens.

Some of the rivers felt like icy cold fairy maidens.

They all had completely different auras and intents, but they were able to perfectly join together off in the distance.

“The Hundred Streams merge together to form the Dao...but alas, if you are unable to do so, you shall die. A pity, a pity...” A sigh suddenly echoed forth from this world...and then, everything vanished.

Ning was once more within the cave, staring at the ordinary-looking pictures of fish and water ripples.

“What just happened?” Ning was puzzled. “Was that an illusion I saw just now? No...I should’ve been able to tell if that was all an illusion. It was no illusion. It was....something else...”

“After ‘Waterwind’ looked at the ‘Hundred Streams of the Windsource’, he left behind these diagrams containing his insights.” Ning raised his head to give the diagrams another look, but then he suddenly froze.

This was because when he did so, the scene he had just seen instantly began to replay in his mind.

The hundred surging rivers, the hundred swimming fish, even that final sigh...all of it appeared once more within his memories.

“It has an inexplicable feeling to it. Almost like...sadness.”

Ning silently pondered on this. The reason why Ning felt that sense of sorrow was due to that final sigh.

“But this so-called ‘hundred streams merging together to form the Dao...’” Ning had the feeling that those words contained an incredibly profound meaning to it. The more he tried to understand it, the more confused he became. However, Ning was in no rush. He sat down in the lotus position and began to slowly meditate on what he had just seen. He was so absorbed by this that he actually forgot to enter the Heavengazer Tower, as he was completely focused on the scene of the hundred streams that he had just seen.

One day after another went past.

Ning continued to sit there, as unmoving as a statue. Dust began to collect and accumulate on his body, and soon Ning looked like an actual statue.

Six years later.

Ning had been completely covered with dust...but finally, on this day, he opened his eyes, revealing a look of surprise and delight in his gleaming,



crystalline gaze.

“The Hundred Streams merge together to form the Dao...the Nine Seals join together to become One...so this is how the Nine Chaos Seals actually work,” Ning murmured softly to himself.

The meaning of the phrase ‘the Hundred Streams merge together to form the Dao’ was simply too profound; he was able to just barely glean a few insights from it. However, while doing so he was able to see many similarities between it and his Nine Chaos Seals, resulting in him gaining many more insights into the ninth seal.

Before leaving the Three Realms, Ning had already mastered the eighth chaos seal. Only one was left.

A series of complicated divine runes began to appear within Ning’s eyes. All nine of the Nine Chaos Seals began to manifest within his eyes, changing and transforming in an endless pattern. In the past, it seemed as though there would never be an end to the changing runes of the Nine Chaos Seals...but once Ning mastered them, the transformations came to an end. Finally, they came together to form the image of what looked like a flower.

This image appeared on Ning’s soul itself, as well as his very truesoul.

It was an azure flower.

It was sacred, holy, natural.

The seal imprint of an azure flower began to naturally manifest itself on Ning’s forehead as well. After appearing briefly, it then quickly faded away and hid itself.

“When the Nine Chaos Seals join together to become one, they become absolutely marvelous. Mother Nuwa must have reached this level as well.” Ning could sense the seal imprint of an azure flower that had appeared on his forehead, an azure flower that was gently swaying.

# Chapter 21: Azureflower Space

The sea of consciousness was located very close to the forehead...and within Ji Ning's sea of consciousness, there was an absolutely beautiful azure flower that was swaying in the wind.

"I never would've thought that after mastering the Nine Chaos Seals, an azure flower seal would appear, with an azure flower appearing in my consciousness as well." Ning could sense himself transforming. In the past, after mastering each chaos seal he would be able to more closely attune with the essence of certain concepts such as destiny, slaughter, darkness, the sword, etc.

Now that the nine had come together, Ning felt an even greater attunement towards the essence of the sword. It made sense; he had the most insights in this regard, after all. He also felt much closer attunement towards rainwater, lightning, space, and other Daos...

"What is this azure flower meant for?"

"Is it meant to help me be more closely attuned to the various essences when I meditate?" Ning was puzzled. He carefully inspected that swaying azure flower.

Whoosh.

When Ning's heartforce brushed against that azure flower...it suddenly began to transform.

Crackle...

Heartforce was supposed to be formless and untouchable, but as soon as it touched the azure flower it was immediately devoured by it.

Inside the azure flower was a region of its own. This space was a blurry, empty region. However, a mist was slowly beginning to materialize inside of it.

"My heartforce was transformed by the azureflower space into mist?" Ning was so surprised and shocked, he immediately came to a halt. Almost ten percent of his heartforce had been used up in an instant!

“Heartforce is ephemeral and formless. Only certain special techniques, such as Houyi’s archery techniques, are able to make use of heartforce. But this azureflower space was actually able to convert and transform heartforce...” Ning could sense that the mist within the azureflower space was filled with a strange, marvelous type of power.

“It can convert heartforce. Is it also capable of converting divine power and Immortal energy?” Ning wondered to himself.

Ning willed a tiny thread of divine power to seep into his sea of consciousness as well. As soon as it brushed against the azure flower, it was immediately devoured by the flower, resulting in a bit more mist to appear inside of it.

“B-b-but...” Ning was dazed.

“It’s actually...the same?”

“When heartforce is devoured, it transforms into mist. When divine power is devoured, it also transforms into mist. And...the mist is the same?!” Ning could hardly believe it. Heartforce and divine power were two completely different types of power; the differences between the two were enormous! And yet, both were somehow converted into a different type of energy, one which Ning was capable of controlling?

Ning could sense how terrifyingly powerful the energy contained within the mist was.

“Or perhaps...it isn’t a ‘conversion’. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the azure flower was able to ‘eat’ my divine power and heartforce, then give birth to this new type of energy?” Ning mused to himself.

“So it can eat both divine power and heartforce...what of Immortal energy?”

Ning willed it, and his Immortal energy flew into his sea of consciousness as well. As soon as it touched the azure flower, it was also devoured right away, resulting in even more mist appearing within the azureflower space.

Ning remained seated in the lotus position inside the cave, a very complicated series of looks flashing over his face. There was surprise on his face as well as puzzlement and excitement.

The azure flower that appeared after the Nine Chaos Seals merged together was simply too marvelous.

Divine power, Immortal energy, heartforce...these were three completely different types of energy, but the azure flower was capable of eating them all and then giving birth to more of the mist.

“How is this azure flower so powerful? It’s actually capable of eating and transforming three completely different types of energy.” Ning murmured silently to himself, “I wonder...was it true that the Nine Chaos Seals were formed naturally by the primordial chaos? Or were they created by some ancient power? They are simply too marvelous.”

“Doesn’t matter, I suppose.” Ning pushed that aside for now.

Many of the abilities these ancient powers were capable of were beyond Ning’s imagination. For example, the supreme figure of the Badlands Everworld was Daolord Badlands, someone who also stood on a level of power that surpassed that of the World-level.

“Let’s see just how powerful that mist is.” Ning willed a hint of the mist to emerge from the azureflower space. Instantly, his entire body began to be filled by the mist, absorbing it like a dry sponge absorbing water. As it did so, Ning began to transform.

“Eh?”

“There’s no way to make the power of the mist leave the body?” Ning was shocked.

Divine power, Immortal energy, and heartforce could all be made to leave the body. This mist energy, however, could not.

Ning spent some time testing it out. Indeed, the mysterious mist was only able reside within his body, unable to leave it!

“What on earth is this mist good for?” Ning knelt down on one knee,

stretching out his right hand and suddenly slapping it against the stone ground. As he did so, a surge of power suddenly burst forth.

BOOM!

The entire cave trembled and a few cracks actually appeared.

“This...” A shocked look was on Ning’s face. He hurriedly waved his hand, causing an estate-world to appear within the cave. Ning quickly entered the estate-world.

This was a Chaos-level estate-treasure which Ning had acquired after entering the Ruins. Ning had quite a few estate-worlds now; the reason he had chosen this one was because it was extremely large.

The insides of the estate-world was nearly ten million meters in size. It contained a vast mountain range, a wide sea, a series of giant continents, and many alien Outsiders that lived here.

Whoosh.

Ning suddenly appeared within the skies of this world.

“Let’s give it a try.” Ning’s eyes lit up and he began to fly through the air.

Boom!

He didn’t use the Ninehorn Lightning Serpent; instead, he just relied on the power of his divine body as he flew. He instantly transformed into a streak of rainbow light...and as he flew, he actually broke past the speed of light. If in the past he was able to travel three hundred thousand kilometers in an instant, now he was able to travel nearly four hundred thousand kilometers in an instant!

It looked like a simple increase of just a third, but in reality breaking past the speed limits of the Heavenly Daos was incredibly difficult. And more importantly, in the past Ning had to rely on the Ninehorn Lightning Serpent in order to reach the speed of light. Now, he wasn’t using the lightning serpent at all, merely relying on the power of his divine body... and yet, he was able to breach the speed of light! Ning hadn’t gained any new insights with regards to space or speed, but his flying speed had just

dramatically increased!

It was almost like becoming a World God.

World Gods were dramatically strengthened in every single way, resulting in them completely eclipsing the various limits of the Heavenly Daos. The limits of the Heavenly Daos were now completely unable to restrict them any further, allowing them to 'brute-force' past the speed of light.

"I was actually able to brute-force past the limits?" Ning came to a halt. He stood there in the air, completely astonished.

"I originally just had the body of a half-step World God....but with the mist supporting me, I'm actually able to effortlessly brute-force the limits of the Heavenly Daos?" Ning truly couldn't believe it.

In truth, when he had struck the ground of the cave with a palm just now, he had already begun to sense it. The power of his palms definitely equaled the power of a Dao weapon. It was absolutely at the level of a World-level expert!

Now, he had apparently also reached the World-level in terms of speed as well.

And the reason for these miraculous results...was the power of the mist that formed within the azureflower region.

Although the energy was unable to leave his body, it supported and reinforced it, upgrading Ning in every single area to an entirely different level. He was now stronger and faster...and Ning had the feeling that he was now as fast as a World God. Even if he wasn't, he had to be extremely close to that level.

He was able to fly faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos while relying solely on his body.

He was able to strike as hard as a World God while solely striking out with his palms. This, too, represented a breaching of the limits of the Heavenly Daos.

The limits of the Heavenly Daos...they were like paper, easily pierced through by Ning.

There was no need for him to rely on his insights from the [Five Treasures]

There was need for any other forms of support.

Just by allowing the mist to reinforce his body, he was able to completely breach the limits of the Heavenly Daos in every single way. Even if he wasn't a World God, he wasn't far off from that level.

"How could it be this powerful?" Only now did Ning truly understand how marvelous the azureflower space was.

"Who on earth came up with this technique?"

The primordial chaos did have quite a few monstrously powerful techniques. For example, Ning's combined usage of the second stage of the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] and the [One True Body] technique to give himself the power of a half-step World God. The primordial chaos also contained stories of some even more powerful techniques that had been devised by truly ancient powers, and in some of those stories these techniques allowed extremely powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals to slay World-level experts.

What did one need in order to kill someone on a higher level?

Ridiculously powerful techniques, terrifying treasures, shockingly high levels of insight into the Dao, and more. Only when one had reached the utmost peak of power in every single aspect could one produce such extraordinary results.

Ning had the feeling that the technique which produced his azureflower space was one such technique.

The stronger one became, the harder it would be to grow even more powerful. There were actually quite a few strength-enhancing techniques akin to the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] or the [One True Body], such as the [Thousand Bodies Sutra], a technique which was even more monstrous. However, after all those clones were joined together into one,

it would become thousands of times more difficult to improve the body any further.

Or, to put it another way...the azureflower space technique was a technique that was thousands of times more valuable than the combination of the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] and the [One True Body] techniques.



# Chapter 22: Continuing Downwards

Ji Ning began to feel excited.

He had just undergone a transformation on a qualitative level. He had long ago mastered the 'Heartsword stance', ensuring that he would be able to withstand a blow or two from even a true World-level expert. If he was able to completely repair Violetjewel, then he might actually be able to give those World-level experts an actual fight.

"Am I going to be one of those legendary monsters who are able to slay World-level experts despite merely being an Elder God?" Ning mumbled to himself, then grinned.

It was too difficult to break through to the World-level.

Every single person who was capable of succeeding in doing so was an absolute genius who had many fortuitous encounters. Thus, an Elder God who could slay a World God had to be an even more brilliant genius who had even better luck and even deeper insights.

"The Dao of the Sword is a Dao meant for combat. I need to do my best to master the second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art. I might not be capable of becoming one of those monsters, but I still need to work as hard as I can to advance through my chosen path." Ning had a look of desire in his eyes.

A man had to aim for the stars and set high goals for himself on his path to cultivation. That way, even if he didn't succeed in his goals, he would still be able to travel farther than most cultivators.

Ning once more appeared within the cave inside the pit. With a wave of his hand, he put away his estate-world treasure.

"This mist energy is truly marvelous. Still...I imagine it'll be used up quite quickly in battle. I need to store up more of it." Ning waved his hand, causing the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance to appear next to him, then entered it.

Within the Heavengazer Tower.

Ning began to fill the azure flower with his heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy. The azure flower accepted it all, ravenously devouring the energy and converting it into mist, resulting in the mist grower denser and denser.

After most of his energy was used up, Ning took a break to recover. He could withdraw energy from the primordial chaos to replenish his divine power, but his heartforce could only be recovered through rest.

After recovering...he continued to pour all his energy into the azure flower.

Whooooosh. Finally, once the mist in the region reached a certain level of density, a vortex suddenly formed which drew in all the mist energy, converting it into a single crystalline drop of water.

“A drop of water?”

Ning attuned to it briefly, then immediately understood.

This drop of water was the form the mist took when it reached an extremely high level of density. When battle began, he would be able to draw the mist energy out from the drop of water.

“I have to use up almost all of my divine power, heartforce, and Immortal energy in order to condense a single water drop.” Ning couldn’t help but feel shocked. “Well, time to continue.”

The primordial chaos was truly vast and infinite. There was a limit to how much of its energy a cultivator could draw upon, with the hard limit being how much the cultivator’s body could withstand! Thanks to the Heavengazer Tower, Ning was able to withdraw chaos energy at a rate that was ten times faster than someone in the outside world. He repeatedly went through a cycle of exhausting all his heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy, then replenishing it through resting. More and more water drops began to appear in the azureflower space. One drop. Two drops. Three drops...

Every single drop was formed through Ning completely exhausting and converting all his energy.

Finally, after a long period of time, a total of thirty-six drops of water were circling within the azureflower space. A strange equilibrium had been reached, and a sense of pressure radiated outwards from the azureflower space, letting Ning know that it had reached its limit for now.

Ning spent a few more days in the cave after this. He needed to get a full picture of what the azure flower could do. As for the other clone of his true body which was within the prisonworld, it had also mastered the Nine Chaos Seals and had gained an azure flower seal of its own, one which was also capable of manifesting those drops of water.

However, for the clone, three drops was the absolute limit.

“It seems as the my true body’s azureflower space is able to hold more power than my backup clone’s?” Ning murmured to himself.

“Is it due to it having a stronger divine body? A stronger Jindan? Or is it due to the soul?” Ning was filled with many questions.

His true body was formed through merging seventeen clones. It had a more powerful divine body, a stronger soul, and a Jindan that was comparable to first-tier Jindans. Its azure flower was more powerful as well.

“No need to dwell on it. For now at least, it seems as though the azureflower energy can only be applied to the divine body,” Ning mused to himself. He had a feeling that the azureflower energy wasn’t that simple, but despite spending quite a bit of time analyzing it he was still unable to discover any other methods of applying it.

“Given Mother Nuwa’s abilities, I’m sure she must’ve been able to merge the Nine Chaos Seals together as well. She also must have an azureflower space of her own, and I’ll wager her insights into it are much greater than mine. She might’ve discovered some of its secrets,” Ning mused. “But...I still have no idea where she’s gone off to. There’s actually no record of her in the Badlands Territory.”

Mother Nuwa had left the Three Realms roughly half a chaos cycle ago. If she had arrived in the Badlands Territory...given her power, her arrival definitely would’ve been recorded down. It must be understood that even

the more powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were known throughout the Badlands Territory. As for the World Gods, all of them would definitely be recorded down. And yet, Ning was unable to find any records of Mother Nuwa at all.

“Or perhaps she didn’t make it to the Badlands Territory? Did she get lost in the spatial vortex tunnel? Given her power, Mother Nuwa should’ve been able to traverse that tunnel with ease unless her luck was so horrid that she was completely surrounded by spatial rifts, giving her no way out at all. The chances of that happening, however, are quite low.”

“Or did she hide her true identity here in the Badlands Territory?”

“Mm. Well, I’ll worry about that later. Given her power...if she’s still in the Badlands Territory, her reputation will quickly spread throughout the region.” Ning was in quite a good mood right now. His mastery of the azureflower space had been more beneficial to him than anything he could imagine. Even if his true body ended up dying here, his backup clone would eventually be able to rebuild it.

“Thank you, senior Waterwind.” Ning turned to look at the words left behind on the cave walls.

It was thanks to the diagram of the ‘Hundred Streams merging together to form the Dao’ that Ning had been able to gain tremendous insights of his own and thus master the Nine Chaos Seals. This was far more valuable and important to Ning than merely improving his sword-arts a bit.

Ning moved to stand at the edge of the cave. He first stared upwards, then downwards towards the bottomless abyss.

“Should I climb upwards? Or should I go down?” This was what Ning was pondering.

With the azureflower energy supporting him, he would be able to easily climb upwards and escape from the pit. But after leaving the pit, would he be able to escape this place safely? Hard to say.

What would happen if he climbed downwards? Still hard to say.

“It won’t be too hard for me to climb upwards, but...” Ning nodded

slowly. “I don’t need to rush out of here. I’ll go down and take a look first. Countless cultivators must’ve been swallowed by the Windsource. Hellsword himself had a pair of Dao weapons on him. The depths of the Windsource Ruins must hold many treasures.”

Although the path downwards might be filled with many dangers, it was also a path that led to great treasures.

It wasn’t impossible that Ning might end up finding four or five Dao weapons there.

“Time to go.” Ning no longer hesitated.

Cultivators were meant to battle against Heaven and Earth. If they wanted to acquire good treasures, they’d have to risk their lives for it!

Ning’s arms stretched out many hundreds of meters. He looked like a giant ape as he swung from crevice to crevice, the azureflower energy filling his body making the process quite simple. In fact, Ning was now able to easily grasp onto jutting pieces of rock without needing to focus on cracks. Previously, Ning wouldn’t be able to maintain his grip, but now he was able to do so with ease.

Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh. He clambered down very agilely with six arms, moving so fast that he looked like a blur.

Ten kilometers. A hundred kilometers. A thousand kilometers.

Ning continued his downwards descent.

Every so often, he would encounter a treasure that was caught within a crack or on a ledge.

“This is way too deep. I must’ve gone down at least thirty thousand kilometers by now.” Ning couldn’t help but secretly sigh in amazement. “The deeper I go, the more powerful the Windsource seems to become as well.”

Right now, the Windsource was at least five or six times more powerful than it had been when he was next to the cave. However, Ning had become so much more powerful that he was still able to proceed in a very

relaxed manner.

“Eh?” Ning’s eyes lit up as he saw a warblade that glistened with bloody light that had been caught within a crevice. As the gray wind blew past the warblade, it emitted an ear-piercing screech. The warblade was quite dazzling to behold, and its aura caused even Ning’s heart to clench.

“A Dao weapon!” Ning revealed a look of delight. “After climbing down thirty thousand kilometers, I picked up more than a hundred Chaos weapons. Now, I’ve finally found a Dao weapon.”

Whoosh.

Ning reached out with his arms, stretching them out several hundred meters as he stuck his hands deep into the crevice, then pulled the warblade out. Judging from the ripples emanating from the warblade, it was an ownerless item. Its former owner had most likely died a long time ago.

“I feel as though its aura is even stronger than Violetjewel’s aura is,” Ning murmured to himself. “It must be quite a powerful Dao weapon.”

Ning’s guess was correct.

This warblade was a weapon which an Elder God had acquired from an incredibly deadly place. It was a top-grade Dao weapon! However, after acquiring the weapon, the Elder God had been unable to escape the danger zone he was in. He continued to flee through the area and in the end had been swept into and perished within the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc.

“For the sake of this warblade alone, I have to make it out of here alive. It’d be a huge waste if I died.” Ning quickly put the warblade away. One could perish at any moment when trapped within a deadly area such as this...but the rewards one could reap could also be staggering.

“I’ll keep going downwards.”

“I still haven’t seen those two Dao weapons which Hellsword found.” Ning reached out with his six arms, continuing his quick downwards descent into the depths of this bottomless pit.

# Chapter 23: Windbeast

Ji Ning continued to clamber downwards, traversing yet another ten thousand kilometers. On the way down, he picked up another twenty-plus Chaos treasures. The reason why he picked up no Protocosmic spirit-treasures was because the gray wind here was so strong that even Protocosmic spirit-treasures would be slowly ground to dust by it. Only Chaos treasures were able to survive the wind for extended periods of time.

“Eh? I reached the bottom?” Ning held onto the walls with his six long arms as he stared downwards.

Rumble...

The gray wind formed a swirling maelstrom at the bottom, but the pit itself had come to an end. All Ning could see was the small part of the enormous maelstrom that was visible from his location.

“This should be the bottom. This is where the wind transforms into a maelstrom, at least. That means that the treasures left behind by the dead cultivators should all be here.” Ning began to grow rather excited. Hellsword had two Dao weapons on him, and Ning had already picked up over a hundred Chaos treasures and a top-grade Dao warblade on the way down. The number of treasures at the bottom had to be immense.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

The closer he got to the treasures, the more careful he became. He slowly climbed downwards, carefully inspecting his surroundings as he did so. The gray wind here was so powerful that if it wasn't for his azureflower energy, there was no way he would be able to climb around here.

“The maelstrom is pretty large.” As he continued to climb downwards, the true size of the gray maelstrom of wind began to reveal itself.

“What?!” Ning was stunned.

The enormous maelstrom covered an area of roughly a thousand kilometers. On one end of the maelstrom was the deep pit which Ning had

just emerged from, while on the other end of the maelstrom was another pit that seemed just as deep and dark. Quite a bit of the gray wind would occasionally howl towards and go through the second pit as well.

“This is...?” Suddenly, Ning had a thought. The image of the ‘Hundred Streams’ once more appeared in his mind, with those rivers all surging forward before coming together as one.

“Now I understand. This is what senior Waterwind spoke of when he said he saw the marvelous sight of the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc. What I experienced just now should’ve been just one of those flows.” Ning immediately understood.

The Hundred Streams of the Windsourc represented a hundred of these tunnels that coiled deep into the planet before joining together at a common location. Each tunnel had to be more than a million kilometers long. The Hundred Streams contained all of the Daos which had been mastered by the ancient power behind this estate!

Waterwind had viewed several of the flows and gained many insights into them. Thus, he had left behind his diagram atop the walls of that cave.

“The pit I just climbed out of and the pit on the other side should belong to the same flow.” Ning nodded slowly to himself. “It’s much like how the waters of a river will occasionally form small whirlpools when going past certain bends. So I’ve only been on a single stream this entire time. Still, it makes sense. Even someone as unfathomably powerful as Waterwind was only able to investigate a few of the streams.”

“I’ll wager that quite a few of the treasures ended up being piled up here somewhere.”

Now, Ning finally understood. After he had been drawn in here from the outside world, he had begun his journey through a single stream and had now encountered the first ‘bend’ in the stream. This meant that he was most likely in the outermost layer of the Hundred Streams!

“The farther down I go, the more dangerous it will probably become!” Ning mused to himself. “Even Daolord Badlands and senior Waterwind



were unable to fully conquer this ancient ruin. If I try to go much deeper, I'll probably be throwing my life away."

Upon realizing that he was still at the outermost layer of the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc, Ning immediately came to his senses.

"I should take away these treasures, then get the hell out of here." Ning immediately came to this decision, then once more began to carefully crawl forwards. Soon, he reached the bottom.

The maelstrom itself didn't have too much of a sucking power to it, just some tearing power. The margins of the maelstrom were actually quite peaceful, and many treasures had been swirled about and tossed to the edges of the maelstrom. Ning saw that there had to be hundreds, perhaps over a thousand treasures with tremendously powerful auras that were scattered around the edges of the maelstrom.

"Seven Dao weapons?" Ning was delighted when he saw this. "And that's just what I can see with the naked eye. There are probably several other Dao weapons that are hidden within storage treasures."

"Hmph." Ning willed the azureflower mist energy to reinforce his legs, allowing him to easily walk across the bottom of this chamber. The sucking power wasn't that strong here, allowing him walk about quite freely.

Ning silently crept forward, soon arriving in a region that was roughly three hundred meters long. There was no wind here at all, and quite a few treasures had been piled up here.

"This is great." Ning waved his hand, collecting the treasures.

Whoosh.

That small corner contained dozens of Chaos treasures as well as a Dao weapon. The Dao weapon was an odd-looking fist-sized slab. Ning used his divine power to bind it, and upon doing so Ning realized that this 'slab' was actually a flexible sword of incredible sharpness that could also be used as a whip.

"Eh? What are these fragments?" Ning glanced at the unremarkable

fragments nearby.

Ning waved his hand, picking up a fragment of a sword handle. “What’s this?” Ning frowned. He could clearly see deep indents on the surface of the handle.

“Are those...fang marks?” This thought suddenly flashed through Ning’s mind.

“Come here.” Ning waved his hand, causing the many shards and fragments to all fly into his estate-treasure. Within the estate-treasure, Ning’s coresense wouldn’t be disturbed by the gray wind, allowing him to more carefully inspect the fragments. What he found was a very strange object located within the large pile of ordinary fragments.

Ning waved his hand, causing the strange object to fly out and come to a rest within Ning’s palm. It was a large, palm-sized bluish-white scale.

The fragments he had picked up were of all different colors, and so Ning hadn’t noticed the scale earlier.

“A scale?” Ning glanced at the patterns on the scale. It looked quite like a scale that would appear on some sort of a beast.

“And those fang marks...fangs that were able grind apart a Chaos treasure...and a scale? I can’t stay here. I need to pick up these treasures, then get out of here.” Ning didn’t even dare to imagine what creature had caused this. He hurriedly flew towards a different corner of the chamber, but as he did so he saw a streak of light fly against the gray wind, emerging from the depths of the chamber and flying towards him with astonishing speed.

Ning blanched when he saw this.

Good heavens.

Even though he had become dramatically stronger, he still had to use his arms and hands to crawl around this place. However, that streak of light was not only moving against the wind, it was doing so at an utterly inconceivable speed.

“Flee.” Ning no longer dared to tarry. His hands stretched out thousands of meters as he hurriedly began to crawl upwards and flee at high speed.

“My...my treasures...”

Just as Ning had picked up that scale, a creature had stirred from deep within this chamber. Its entire body was bluish-white, it had a crystalline mane, the head of a tiger, a body that was completely covered in scales, an extremely long tail, and four mighty limbs.

After being born, it had lived its entire life here within this endless tunnel.

It would occasionally discover some sabers, knives, staves, hammers, and other weapons that fell into its lair. These weapons were useless to it, but it liked to collect them and hoard them! It even placed a few of the scales it had shed in the corners of the chambers where there was no wind, so as to signify that those treasures belonged to it!

“You actually dare to rob me of my treasures.”

“Die.”

“Die!”

It was enraged. It immediately transformed into a streak of light, flying against the wind towards the invader.

“What sort of a freak is this? How can it possibly fly directly against the wind of the Hundred Streams? Does this scale belong to it?” Although Ning had fled after taking just one glance at the creature, he was still able to tell that it was a strange beast that was completely bluish-white in color, while the scale he had acquired was also bluish-white. “And those shards of treasures that had been bitten apart...did those teeth marks come from it?”

“The undamaged Chaos treasures were all high-grade or top-grade in quality, while the broken ones were all fairly low quality Chaos treasures.”

“Still...for it to be able to chew Chaos treasures apart...”

Ning immediately understood that this monster was most likely far too

powerful for him to handle.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!!!

Ning's six arms moved in a blur as he frantically clambered upwards. He had never crawled as fast as he was crawling right now. Before this, he had been moving very slowly, for fear of something dangerous happening. Now, he was climbing at his absolute maximum speed. In almost the blink of an eye, Ning propelled himself upwards ape-style by more than ten thousand kilometers.

Whoosh!

But despite how fast Ning was climbing, that bluish-white streak of light flew upwards even faster, even though it was going against the wind. In fact, it had caught up to him!

"Damn. I found so many treasures. Am I going to die here now? This sucks!" Ning turned his head, staring at the ferocious, bluish-white monster that had drawn close to him.

# Chapter 24: The Battle in the Abyss

The crystalline mane of the bluish-white beast trembled as it glared at Ji Ning, its dark yellow eyes filled with hatred and murder.

Ji Ning clung onto the walls of the pit with one hand, as he turned to stare at the bluish-white scaled monster.

Their gazes met.

"I don't want to be enemies with you," Ning said.

"Die!!!" The bluish-white monster suddenly let out a furious roar as it struck out with its tail, striking so fast that Ning blanched.

Ning hurriedly use his five free arms to strike out with his sword-arts. It was as though five black holes had suddenly appeared in the air and moved to deflect the oncoming attack.

BOOM!!!

The incredible power of the collision caused even Ning's body to tremble, smashing him against the stone walls behind him. A large crack had appeared on the walls, but thankfully Ning had a tough divine body and a top-grade suit of Chaos armor, as well as the support of that azureflower mist energy. All these things ensured that he was able to withstand the blow...but from this very first clash, Ning instantly understood that his foe was even more stronger than he was!

Ever since Ning had mastered the Nine Chaos Seals and acquired the azureflower energy, Ning had felt confident that he was very close to the World God level of power and perhaps had even reached it.

But this monstrosity before him...a simple strike from its tail had complete overpowered Ning!

"Die!" Die!" Die!" The bluish-white monster charged forward furiously, raking out with its claws.

"I gotta get out of here." Ning quickly clambered up the walls like a spider, sometimes using his left hand to climb, sometimes using his right.

He'd occasionally block an attack while occasionally borrow from the force of the collisions to propel himself further upwards.

Riiiiip! The sharp claws tore a gash through the stone walls.

Whap! The powerful tail-strikes caused the stone to shudder.

Ning was at a complete disadvantage.

“Eh?”

“This beastie...doesn't seem to be that tough.” After exchanging a few dozen blows with the creature, Ning was slowly beginning to come to this conclusion. “It is strong and fast, and its claws are quite sharp, but...it doesn't seem to have many insights into the Dao at all. It has an incredibly powerful body, but in battle it is clumsy beyond belief.”

The azureflower mist energy had strengthened Ning's body, making it so that the difference in power between him and the beast wasn't that great. If Ning hadn't mastered the Nine Chaos Seals and was only as strong as he was when he had first been drawn into the pit, he would've been flattened by that first swipe of the tail. It wouldn't have mattered how profound his insights into the Dao were!

“I can't keep wasting time with it. If too much time passes, my azureflower mist energy will be used up and I'll be finished.” After battling for just a short period of time, one of the drops of liquid azureflower energy had already been used up. This shocked Ning and brought him back to his senses.

“You can't kill me!” Ning barked.

“You. Die!” The bluish-white scaled creature continued to fight in a berserk manner.

Ning took out the warblade. This was the Dao weapon which he had picked up a short while ago, and Ning had already bound it to himself quite some time ago. In terms of raw power, it was even stronger than the still-damaged Violetjewel!

“F\*ck off!” Ning exploded with power.

Swords are double-edged weapons. Sabers have just a single blade. However, the tip of this warblade was incredibly sharp, and thus it could also be used to stab, split, and scrape, just as a sword would. Still, it was still better suited for more explosive and forceful attacks.

“Heavenbreaker stance!”

Ning held the warblade in a two-handed grip. He allowed his divine power and the azureflower mist energy to both blast forth at full power as he raised the warblade up high, then furiously chopped down towards the bluish-white scaled monster before him.

The ‘Heavenbreaker stance’ was Ning’s most forceful attack. Of Ning’s many sword-arts, it was the sword-art which was best suited for use with a weapon such as this warblade. In fact, after getting some insights into the second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, Ning’s ‘Heavenbreaker stance’ now contained even more of a killing intent than it did before. When Ning unleashed this attack he was striking downwards, resulting in the attack being sped up by the howling wind. His saber-light flashed out far faster than the speed of light, giving the bluish-white scaled monster no time to dodge at all.

“GWRAAAR!” The monster confidently blocked with its claws.

The enormous crescent saber-light actually blasted the sharp claws aside, landing against the creature’s scaly body.

BOOM!

The bluish-white scaled creature was actually knocked backwards, scales shattering at the point of impact and flying out of its body. It slammed into the stone walls of the pit with a bang, causing the stone to tremble and multiple cracks to appear.

In raw power alone...with the aid of the warblade, Ning was actually able to overpower even the bluish-white beast. It was the beast’s own fault for being too stupid; it had a mighty body that was stronger than even the body of a World God, but the way in which it was able to use that power was quite crude. It simply had far too low a level of insight into the Dao.

Or perhaps it might have no insights at all. Perhaps all it knew was just the most basic of attacks.

“AWOOOO!” After smashing into the stone walls, the bluish-white creature suddenly raised its head and let out a furious howl.

Its howling voice contained a strange, rippling wind to it.

Whoosh.

The sound of its voice was carried away by the Windsource and instantly transmitted to a different region.

Deep within a distant pit, a windbeast that had been slumbering suddenly raised its head. It murmured softly to himself, “An invader?”

“There’s an invader?”

“That kid Fuu hasn’t been alive long enough. He’s too weak, which is why we had him stand watch over one of the least dangerous regions. And yet he’s asking for reinforcements?”

The windbeasts all heard this sound.

Some of them had powerful auras, some of them had weak auras. Some of them actually shook their heads and sighed.

Whooooooooosh.

Nine of the closest windbeasts transformed into streaks of light, flying through the wind like fish swimming through water. When Ning had seen the bluish-white creature fly at high speed against the wind, he had been so terrified that he immediately fled. Only after actually fighting it did he realize that he was actually able to beat it. These windbeasts were born in the Windsource, after all; this was why they were able to fly within the wind with such ease.

“His body is too tough. Even my warblade is only able to chip off a few of its scales.” Upon seeing this, Ning instantly lost all desire to fight against the creature any longer. In a place as dangerous as this, he couldn’t just waste his azureflower energy willy-nilly; if he ran out, he’d die!

“Time to leave.”



Ning quickly clambered upwards, moving more than a thousand kilometers.

“Running?” The bluish-white scaled monster continued its pursuit.

“What was that?!” As Ning climbed upwards while blocking the attacks from the first monster, Ning suddenly saw a second streak of light fly towards him from down below.

“Another one?!” Ning was horrified. “Move! Move! Move!” Ning was truly panicking now. He used four of his arms to furiously climb upwards while his other two arms used the warblade to furiously strike down upon the chasing windbeast. Each blow consumed quite a bit of his azureflower energy, but each time the windbeast suffered just slight injuries. It refused to give up the chase.

Whooooosh!

Ning continued to climb upwards at high speed. “I should be just a few thousand kilometers away from the exit. Once I escape the pit, the gray wind won’t be able to cause me any trouble. I’ll easily be able to fly faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos and it’ll be much easier for me to deal with that monster.”

“You can’t even deal with a single invader?” The second streak of light had arrived as well.

“Help me kill him,” the first windbeast growled.

“Shit.” Ning gritted his teeth as he saw yet another streak of light appear in the depths of the pit.

“How many of the damned things are there?” As Ning continued to climb upwards, he defended himself with two hands. He now wielded the warblade with one hand, using it to launch incredibly powerful attacks. With the other hand, he activated the slab that he had picked up, causing a flexible sword to immediately fly out from within it. This was the second Dao weapon which Ning had acquired.

The warblade was used to launch ferocious, savage attacks. The flexible sword was used to execute the ‘Shadowless stance’ and other

unpredictable sword stances.

As for Ning's other four hands, he continued to use them to frantically climb upwards.

Boom! Boom!

"Kill!"

Two of the windbeasts furiously assaulted Ning, and he defended against them while continuing to climb upwards. Right at this moment...the third windbeast arrived as well.

"B-b-but..." Not only was Ning facing the attacks of three windbeasts, he could see two more streaks of light soaring upwards from the dark depths of the pit. One of those streaks of light moved with incredible speed; clearly, it was the fastest of the five.

"If I let them surround me, I'm dead."

Ning furiously defended against their attacks, using his Dao weapons to block. He also redirected some of their attacks, making it so that the three windbeasts interfered with each other's attacks.

"There it is!" Ning could see the bright opening above him.

"Gotta charge out!" Ning could already see the fourth windbeast, the incredibly quick one, drawing very close to him.

BOOM! Ning intentionally let himself be hit by a claw strike.

Swoosh! He borrowed the power of the blow, letting it sweep him upwards and shoot him outside of the pit entrance.

"GRWAAAAR!"

"Fuu, not only were you unable to kill him, you actually hindered me."

"You idiot! He was barely able to handle me. You were useless!"

"Both of you, shut up."

"All three of you idiots, shut up!" The fourth windbeast let out a roar, causing the other three to fall silent.

The four windbeasts all looked upwards, a look of rage and dread in their dark yellow eyes. They didn't dare fly out of their pit, as the Ruins were far too incredibly dangerous. Even they were only able to live peacefully in their local part of the Hundred Streams. There were many places which were death traps even for them.

“Eh?” After flying out of the pit and away from the gray wind, Ning landed on the ground. He glanced towards the deep, enormous pit in surprise. “They didn't come out?”

“Whew. I finally escaped!”

# Chapter 25: The House By the Lake

Ji Ning kept a firm hold on the ground. Only when he saw that no windbeasts were emerging did he relax and glance at his surroundings.

“Eh?” Ning slowly rose to his feet, looking around himself with surprise.

The vast skies were filled with streams of gray energy that criss-crossed in the air. A stream of gray energy was flowing through the endless pit he had just crawled out of as well. Ning immediately understood that the gray energy was actually the gray ‘wind’ which had enveloped him and Hellsword earlier.

“When Hellsword and I were fighting, we must’ve activated some restrictive spell by accident, resulting in us being swept into that tornado.” Ning carefully inspected the area. “If those windbeasts were too afraid to come out here, it has to mean that this place is dangerous.”

He was in a vast new realm. Aside from some enormous pits, Ning could also see some enormous continents, mountains, valleys, and lakes.

Everything looked so peaceful!

However, Ning’s heartrate began to speed up. Ever since he had manifested the azureflower seal after merging the Nine Chaos Seals, Ning had become even more keenly attuned to the essence of destiny. He was able to easily see the future destinies of mortals at one glance, and he could now sense that destiny was warning him that this place was incredibly dangerous. It was as though those peaceful-looking continents, mountains, and lakes were all filled with danger.

“What should I do?” Ning raised his head to stare towards the skies, then towards the area around him. “I can sense that every single direction is filled with grave danger.”

“If every direction is filled with danger...and if the pits are filled with all those windbeasts...”

“Forget it. I’ll just randomly choose a direction. It’ll be up to luck.”

After pondering for a moment, Ning had no choice but to harden his

heart. Warblade and flexible sword in hands, he began to carefully move forward. If every direction was filled with danger, then picking a particular direction didn't matter.

Ning walked out of the barren wastelands and into a grasslands. Although he sensed tremendous danger the entire time, he made his way forward safely.

"Maybe I'll be able to walk out of this place," Ning consoled himself.

"The lake is quite pretty."

He saw a lake within the grasslands, so beautiful that it looked like the tears of a lovely maiden.

"I hope nothing dangerous suddenly pops out of the lake." Ning continued to remain vigilant, and he even kept the Goldstar Beads of the Heavens around him, so as to help forewarn him of any incoming danger. Of course, if he wasn't strong enough no amount of vigilance would matter.

Whoosh!

A ripple suddenly spread out and encompassed Ning, causing his surroundings to change and transform.

"This is...?" Ning stared at his surroundings. He could still see the beautiful lake, but a quiet little residence had appeared by the side of the lake. The house was emanating ripples that were so powerful, they caused Ning to shiver.

"What's going on?"

Ning could sense how terrifying and deadly that house was. He wanted to move away from it, but no matter how he walked he was unable to move farther than three kilometers away from the house. It was as though space itself was twisted here.

"If I can't leave, I suppose I'll have to go over and take a look," Ning mused to himself. "The person who built this house has to be far more powerful than me. If he wants me dead, I won't be able to escape."

He had no other options. His only choice was to go forward, and he did so, gently pushing open the gates to the courtyard of the house.

Inside the courtyard was a garden and a grassy lawn, as well as several seats that were scattered across it. In the center was a graceful, elegant house that emanated ripples of tremendous power. Ning walked over towards the house.

Three of the four sides of the house had windows, while one side had a door. The windows were made from wood and could be easily seen through.

“Eh?” Ning could vaguely make out a figure seated in the lotus position inside the house. This caused Ning to feel quite shocked. However, Ning still chose to walk forward to the doors of the house.

Inside the house, there was an old man dressed in golden Daoist robes who was seated atop a prayer mat. The old man’s eyes were closed, and he was holding a horsetail whisk in his hands. Next to him lay a miniature nine-level pagoda.

His Daoist robes, his whisk, the prayer mat, the nine-level pagoda... everything emanated ripples of absolutely shocking power.

“That nine-level pagoda in particular radiates an aura that is a hundred times as powerful as the aura of the warblade. This was the aura which Violetjewel gave me before I bound it.” Ning was stunned. “Can it be that this nine-level pagoda is also a treasure that is on a higher level than that of Dao weapons?”

Ji Ning was no longer the same person he was back in the Three Realms. He was now a vastly more experienced figure.

Chaos treasures were generally wielded by Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.

Dao weapons were generally employed by World Gods and Chaos Immortals.

As for weapons which surpassed Dao weapons like Violetjewel or this tower...they were items which would drive any World-level expert mad

with desire!

“His robes, the whisk, the prayer mat...those three are all Dao weapons, and they each have auras that are as strong as the aura of my warblade.” Ning’s own eyes were shining with desire as well. The treasures that he could see were already enough to drive any World-level expert mad with lust.

“But...it seems as though this old man is already dead?”

Ning sensed no life energy at all from the old man’s body, only an aura of ancient might.

“I’ll give it a test.” Ning moved many steps backwards, then willed his Protocosmic spirit-rope to fly out. Ning didn’t dare to actually approach the old man and try to take the treasures himself, for fear of activating some sort of dangerous spell or formation. Thus, he instead willed his Protocosmic spirit-rope to loop around the nine-level pagoda, intending to tug it over. If he could acquire that pagoda, this entire trip would be more than worth it.

The pagoda was something which even World-level experts would go crazy for. The only reason why World God Northrest was able to acquire Violetjewel was due to the assistance of Vastheaven Palace. For Ning to be able to so easily acquire another such treasure was simply a bit of staggeringly good luck.

Rumble...

As the Protocosmic rope moved within nine meters of the old man, a wind suddenly arose around him. As the wind blew past the Protocosmic spirit-rope, half of it was instantly disintegrated into dust.

A series of words suddenly appeared in midair, every single character gleaming with golden light.

The fellow Daoist who is capable of defeating the Windsource Formation shall acquire my treasures.

Ning was filled with both shock and desire.

Windsor Formation? What was the connection between it and the Hundred Streams of the Windsor? Could it be that this old man was the creator of these ancient ruins? If he really was, could this house be the house where he lived? Ning couldn't quite believe it.

"If you die, you die. Why did you have to put up these formations and spells?" Ning's head hurt. He had grown dramatically more powerful, but he was still just barely capable of damaging a Protocosmic spirit-treasure. To instantly disintegrate it into dust? He was far from capable of such a thing.

"Let me try it again."

Ning willed a large battleaxe to appear. This battleaxe was covered with divine runes, and it was a top-grade Chaos treasure.

"A top-grade Chaos treasure...I refuse to believe you can destroy it." Ning immediately used his Immortal energy to send the battleaxe to fly towards the seated old man. Once more, when the axe reached nine meters of the old man, a wind arose. Hissssss! When the wind blew across the axe, it emitted an ear-piercing hiss.

The axe remained undamaged...but it was unable to advance any further.

"What's going on?" Ning could sense incredibly powerful energy blocking his battleaxe's path. No matter how hard he 'pushed', he was unable to make it advance at all.

Swoosh.

Suddenly, a stream of energy flew out from the nine-level pagoda next to the seated old man. The stream of energy transformed into the appearance of a black-robed child.

"Stop trying. You aren't even a World-level expert. Why are you wasting your time?" The black-robed child snapped rather irritably.

"You..." Ning was startled.

"I'm a treasure spirit. Haven't you seen one before?" The black-robed child glanced sideways at the old man's corpse, then said, "And you can



stop lusting after the old man's treasures. Even if you managed to break through the Windsource Formation, you'd have to swear a lifeblood oath first. Only after accomplishing it would you be allowed to acquire these treasures. As for breaking through the formation? Only peak World Gods would have a shot at it."

"Only peak World Gods would have a shot at it?" Ning was puzzled. "What level was this senior at?"

"He was just a peak World God as well." The black-robed child smirked. "However, he was one of the servants of Daolord Windsource, who gave him a few treasures like the Windsource Formation. Although no one is currently commanding it, it'll still be very hard for anyone to break through it."

Ning nodded slowly.

This all made sense. The deceased World God had used the phrase, 'the fellow Daoist who is capable of defeating the Windsource Formation'; for him to use the words 'fellow Daoist' meant that the person capable of defeating the formation would probably on the same general level of power as he had been.

"Ugh. When Daolord Windsource died, all of his servants accompanied him to the grave. If he died, he died, but why the hell did the old man have to keep me trapped here as well?" The black-robed child sighed, then shook his head. "I'm a venerable treasure that has a quintessence inside, but I've been trapped here for ages. What a waste!"

# Chapter 26: Escaping Alive

A magic treasure that had a quintessence core within it?

Right. Violetjewel had a quintessence core within it as well. Its physical body had suffered incredible damage but the quintessence core inside of it was completely unharmed.

“Don’t you want to leave?” Ji Ning asked.

“Of course I do. I’m bored to death here.” The black-robed child glanced sideways at Ning.

“Aside from breaking the Windforce Formation and swearing a lifeblood oath, is there truly no other way of taking you away?” Ning asked. “If you can tell me a way, I’ll definitely do my best to carry it out.”

“Well, there is.” The black-robed child nodded.

“There is? What?” Ning’s eyes lit up.

“Become a Daolord first,” the black-robed child said.

Ning instantly felt speechless. The only Daolord in the Badlands Territory which Ning was aware of was Daolord Badlands. There might be other Daolords who were in seclusion, but regardless of how many were present, their level of power was a level far beyond Ning’s. If Ning truly did become a Daolord in the future, it wouldn’t be hard for him to acquire treasures such as this. Didn’t Daolord Windsorce himself parcel out such treasures to his World God servants?

One could imagine how fabulously wealthy Daolords were!

“How many servants did Daolord Windsorce have exactly?” Ning asked curiously.

“Kid, you aren’t even a World God yet.” The black-robed child shook his head, then said in a smug manner, “Let me broaden your horizons a bit, then.”

“Right, right.” Ning’s eyes lit up.

“Daolord Windsorce had a rather weird disposition, but he truly was an

incredible figure. He roved through the endless primordial chaos and journeyed through many of its territories. He directly enslaved over five hundred World-level experts, with more than a hundred others willingly joining him as retainers..." The black-robed child let out an amazed sigh. "In fact, he even had a Daolord as his retainer."

"What?!" Ning was shocked.

"Incredible, right?" The black-robed child said smugly, "When Daolord Windsource descended upon this territory, the owner of this territory came out and welcomed him with great ceremony and courtesy."

"But alas...I heard that Daolord Windsource failed in his attempts to merge his Hundred Streams together down. Before dying, he exiled his eldest disciple, the one who had become a Daolord, as well as some other disciples and retainers. He then led all of his slaves and the rest of his World-level retainers to this place."

"According to what Daolord Windsource said, this was his ancient homeland. He left this place long, long ago and voyaged through the outside the world. If he was to die, he wished to die at home."

"However, his ancestral chaosworld had vanished long ago. Thus, Daolord Windsource established the Windsource Chaosworld in the same location where his ancient chaosworld had been. He then established the Windsource Ruins. Supposedly, he did all this to show off all the insights into the Dao he had gained during his life. After leaving his Dao behind... he died." The black-robed child pointed towards the seated old man. "Look. That's one of the poor bastards who served him and was forced to join him in death."

"More than five hundred World-level experts joined him in death?" Ning was speechless.

"Right." The black-robed child nodded. "Daolords, y'know? Daolord Windsource was actually pretty peaceful. Some of the crazier Daolords will go completely berserk. When they die, they will make their entire territory die along with them, going so far as to slaughter every living being they can find before dying in a sea of corpses."

Ning truly was unable to say anything.

Make an entire territory die with them, then continuing to slaughter until they themselves perished?

Madmen.

The more powerful a person was, the more terrifying they would be when gripped by madness. It seemed as though Daolord Windsource really was fairly calm by comparison.

“So you are saying that more than five hundred World-level experts died in these ruins?” Ning sighed in amazement.

“A Samsara Daolord, more than five hundred World-level experts, and an enormous number of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all died here,” the black-robed child said. “Over the course of countless years, quite a few treasure-seeking cultivators have died here as well, leaving behind many of their own treasures. Thus, this place really is like a giant treasure vault. The only question is...are you strong enough to loot it?”

“You are actually pretty lucky.” The black-robed child let out a sigh. “You actually were able to find this place. The wind is formless and fickle, and thus the internal structure of Daolord Windsource’s estate is also ever-changing. Since you were able to find this place, you now have a chance of being able to escape.”

“A chance of being able to escape?” Ning was surprised and delighted.

“Right. There’s a pavilion over there. Once you go inside of it, it’ll teleport you to the outer regions. The outer regions are much safer than this place,” the black-robed child said. “Alright, that’s all. Hurry up and beat it. You were lucky enough to find this estate this time, but you probably won’t be so lucky next time.”

After speaking, the black-robed youth flew back into the nine-level pagoda.

Ning once more turned his gaze towards the golden-robed old man who was seated in the lotus position within the house. He couldn’t help but shake his head and sigh. This old man was a peak World God; most likely,

he was on par with even the likes of World God Northrest or even stronger. And yet...his destiny had been to accompany his master unto death!

Daolord Windsourc had only driven away some of his disciples and retainers. The rest of his retainers, along with his slaves, had all died with him here. Apparently, the retainers who had died were the ones he didn't like. The ones he did like, he had exiled along with those disciples, sparing them instead of having them die with him.

"The treasures are right there in front of me, but I just can't get at them."

"Forget it. Time to go."

Ning knew that luck and fortune couldn't be forced. If he really was lucky, he'd be able to find a World God's corpse that wasn't protected by any formations or spells at all, allowing him to easily take away any treasures. That would really be a helluva stroke of luck!

And yet, he was still fairly lucky. Although he hadn't been able to acquire the treasures, he had learned of a safe route out of here.

After leaving the house, he turned to glance one final time at the golden-robed elder's corpse. Only then did Ning begin to make his way through the courtyard. There were a total of three pavilions within the courtyard, but Ning was in no rush to leave. Instead, he first inspected the other rooms.

"There might be some other treasures left here," Ning mused to himself.

"Eh?"

Ning really did find something inside one of the rooms.

This was a room with a study. There was a table here, a quill pen having been tossed atop of it. The table was covered with golden paper, but there was plenty of paper scattered on the ground as well.

"Damn. Damn. Damn."

"Damn me for choosing to serve that old bastard."

"Damn that old bastard for being unfair and partial."

“You damn well deserved to lose your Dao and die!”

The words on the paper were filled with hatred. In truth, the retainers didn't realize what had happened right away. Only after Daolord Windsource had sealed their truesouls did they understand what was happening. Given that it was guaranteed that their souls would soon be shattered, how could these slaves and retainers possibly feel afraid of him any longer? For them to merely vent their rage on a few pieces of paper was nothing!

A pity for them that Daolord Windsource had already went into silent seclusion to wait for death to come. How could he possibly care about the ravings and curses of these ant-like beings?

In the instant of his death, the seals covering the truesouls of his slaves and retainers were all activated, causing all of their truesouls to be destroyed as well.

“This World God must've been fond of calligraphy. This pen is actually a Dao weapon.” Ning was amazed. This was the first time he had seen a pen-shaped Dao weapon. He hurriedly picked it up and easily bound it to himself.

The quill of this pen could transform into countless strands of white thread that could entangle one's foes, while the tip of the pen could be used as an awl or dagger.

It could be used for soft attacks or hard attacks. This truly was a fierce weapon. However, the deceased World God had long ago grown accustomed to using it for calligraphy.

“If I keep searching, perhaps I'll find more.” Ning thoroughly searched the rest of the rooms but found nothing else. Still, Ning was in an excellent mood. A quick search had resulted in him gaining a pen-shaped Dao weapon which other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would go mad over.

“Time to go.” Not hesitating at all, Ning immediately began to move towards the pavilions.

There were three pavilions in total. Ning used his Immortal energy to take control of the nearby grass to test the pavilions out. When he sent the grass into the second pavilion, the grass suddenly disappeared as it was teleported away.

“There it is. It really was teleported away. I wonder if it was teleported to some place safe or some place dangerous.” Ning could sense the ripples from the teleportation. “At least there’s a chance of getting out of here. In I go.”

Ning strode forward, entering the pavilion. As he did so...swoosh! He disappeared into thin air.

Ning re-appeared somewhere else in the middle of the air.

“Where am I?” Ning glanced downwards, a look of delight instantly appearing on his face. “The region I was in previously?”

He had been journeying through this region for more than a year before encountering and battling Hellsword. Only then had he been swept into the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc. Now, he had made it back to this dangerous region. However, Ning now knew that compared to the core regions he had just escaped, this ‘dangerous region’ and the swamps were all incredibly safe. Even Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were able to wander through this region with ease!

“I managed to come back with quite a haul of treasures. If I died in there, all my treasure-scavenging would’ve been for nothing.” Ning was filled with contentment and happiness.

“Eh?”

Ning suddenly stared off into the distance. His vision was incredibly keen, especially after the azureflower energy began reinforcing every part of his body. He was now able to see to great distances with the naked eye, and he immediately saw a warship drifting through the distant skies next to a chain of mountains. This warship had been resized to be merely a few dozen meters long, and it clung tightly to the chain of mountains.

“Elder God Skysouth?” Ning immediately recognized the warship. He

couldn't help but murmur to himself, "It seems the two of us really are destined to clash."

Swoosh.

Ning immediately began to fly towards the warship, the Goldstar Beads of the Heavens swirling around him.



# Chapter 27: Ji Ning and the Flamefairy

Karma was truly a wondrous, mysterious thing.

As Ji Ning flew towards the warship, he couldn't help but sigh. When he had first entered the Ruins, Elder God Skysouth had relied on his army of slaves to attack Ning and attempt to seize Ning's treasures. In truth, Ning didn't hold much of a grudge. Anyone who entered the world of cultivation had to abide by its many unspoken rules, and combat was extremely common within the Ruins. If Ning truly had been killed, he would've only blamed himself for being too weak.

Back then, he had elected to flee.

After roaming about the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc, he had ended up acquiring multiple Dao weapons and had mastered the Nine Chaos Seals, materializing the azureflower seal and growing dramatically more powerful. And now, as soon as he exited the Hundred Streams, he had run into Elder God Skysouth once more. If there was no enmity whatsoever between the two, Ning probably would've just left; that was the type of person he was. But now that there was a bit of bad blood...Ning didn't hesitate at all in choosing to chase after him.

This, too, was karma!

"Destiny and karma truly do work in unfathomable ways." Ning could sense the unfathomably distant and vast essence-river of destiny ebbing and surging.

He was now able to see the fate of mortals with but a single glance, discerning their future joys and sorrows.

Truly formidable cultivators, however...

Ning found it difficult to see their destinies.

Although destiny was often viewed as being abstruse, it actually operated on simple principles. Destiny was formed by the entangling of countless different strings of karma. For example, Ji Ning held a grudge against Old Man Yuan, which was why Ji Ning had ended up joining

Fogstone and being stationed here on the Windsource Chaosworld! But of course, the secret workings of destiny were trillions of times more complicated than the simple 'cause and effect' of karma.

Ning understood another principle as well. The past was difficult to change, but the future was not.

For example, Ning might be able to see the destined life path of a mortal, but because the future had yet to actually happen, for that mortal's destiny to be changed wouldn't be too hard. For example, if a powerful cultivator suddenly chose to intervene in that mortal's life, that mortal's destiny would easily be changed.

The Book of Life and Death was a good example. It set down the destined fates of mortals, but if that mortal gained great karmic merit, his life could be completely changed.

In fact, Ning had the sneaking suspicion that some unfathomably powerful figures might be capable of reversing things that had already occurred in the past! For example...perhaps a cultivator whose true soul was destroyed could be revived.

This was Ning's greatest hope and goal as he continued on his path of cultivation. His greatest desire was to see his beloved wife be brought back to life.

Ning continued to chase after the warship, moving closer and closer to it, but his mind began to wander as he began to ponder on the workings of karma and destiny. In truth, he didn't view Elder God Skysouth as much of an opponent.

A hundred Elder Gods in an Elder God Formation were very formidable and were capable of holding off even a World God for a period of time, but Ning didn't intend to give Elder God Skysouth the chance to act as he pleased.

The warship continued to slowly fly through the mountains. Elder God Skysouth was seated on at the front of the ship, lazily watching the skies before him. Next to him was a table covered with wine and delicacies, along with two female servants who were attending to him. Behind him

were six Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who were maintaining a watchful vigilance.

In front of the warship, a blazing figure was fleeing at high speed. The area around this fiery-robed woman was filled with countless daggers of flame.

“Flamefairy.” Elder God Skysouth chortled. “You’ve been fleeing for quite some time now. I imagine you should understand that you won’t be able to escape me. If I wanted to, I could’ve caught you long ago. However, I chose not to. I can’t bear to see such an unmatched beautiful Immortal maiden like yourself die within a place like this.”

“All I want you to do is be one of my retainers. Why must you be so stubborn?” Elder God Skysouth drained all the wine from his winecup. The female servant next to him smiled flirtatiously and quickly helped him fill it once more.

“Just a retainer?” The fleeing Su Youji laughed coldly.

“You look ravishing when you are angry, Flamefairy. Your [Libertine Dream] technique truly is alluring.” Elder God Skysouth couldn’t help but sigh in praise. “I’m not asking that much. All you need to do is serve me as a retainer while also being my pleasure-companion. What’s the point of cultivation? It is to be able to travel as far as we can on our paths with our hearts filled with pleasure. But for someone like me...I no longer have any hopes with regards to cultivation. All I can seek is excitement and pleasure, yes?”

“I train in the [Libertine Dream]. I cannot possibly become your pleasure-companion,” Su Youji sent mentally.

The [Libertine Dream] technique did not permit the user to lose her virginity.

This was a technique which Su Youji had devised for herself after she saw fragments of an ancient technique. Su Youji had improved with dramatic speed after developing this technique. She had been cultivating for less than a million years but had long ago become comparable to a supreme Elder God or Ancestral Immortal. However, because she was a Ki

Refiner, she was a bit weaker than Fiendgod Body Refiners in close combat.

“The forbidden fruits taste the sweetest.” Elder God Skysouth let out a soft sigh, his voice echoing by Su Youji’s ears. “Someone like me can buy and sell even female Ancestral Immortals as chattel, but one as mesmerizing as you is almost impossible to find. I urge you to stop running. If you keep running around like this, you might wind up activating a dangerous formation of some sort.”

Elder God Skysouth was quite relaxed.

As soon as he had seen Flamefairy Su Youji, he had immediately desired to possess her and had tried to force her to become his retainer. She knew that she wasn’t a match for him and so had been willing to bow her head, but...the lifeblood oath which Elder God Skysouth had wanted her to swear had been simply too onerous. Although she was a ‘retainer’ in name, in reality she would be nothing more than a toy for him to enjoy. The reason why she was known as the Flamefairy was because she had an explosive, fiery temper. There was no way she would accept such terms.

She had trained for less than a million years. Even though she was just a Ki Refiner, she was still comparable to supreme Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. She had an extremely high level of insight into the Dao and could quite possibly reach the World-level of power. How could someone like her possibly be willing to become someone else’s plaything?

But Elder God Skysouth was quite patient. He was willing to slowly chase after her.

He had once tried to send his servants to chase after her, but she had furiously fled at maximum speed. Skysouth had immediately recalled his servants. Such a high-speed chase could easily result in the activation of some hidden formation, and he wasn’t willing to see the Flamefairy die like this.

And so, he had slowly chased after her.

With the Flamefairy fleeing at a fairly low speed, he wouldn’t be in much danger.

In addition, since she was running in front of him while he was slowly chasing from behind, she was essentially serving as a scout for him that was helping him test and see if the area up ahead was safe or not. Where else could he possibly find a free scout like her? He needed time to tame the Flamefairy's unruly spirit anyhow.

To tame such a peerlessly beautiful Immortal woman was no easy feat. Time would be needed...but once he succeeded...

Just the thought of it made him quiver.

"Who is there?!" Elder God Skysouth suddenly put away his warship and turned to look behind himself.

The two female servants next to him were badly frightened, but the six Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals simply looked backwards with vigilance.

Behind them was a white-robed youth who was flying straight towards them, surrounded by countless golden beads that were swirling around him.

"Careful, Master." The six were shocked, as they all recognized Ji Ning. The two most powerful of them had used treasures to attack Ning faster than the speed of light, but Ning had broken through their attacks with one blow and then easily escaped.

"The Sentinel?" Elder God Skysouth smirked.

Whooooooooosh! A large group of Elder Gods immediately appeared around him. These were the hundred Elder Gods which Skysouth carried with him at all times inside an estate-treasure. This represented the greatest force he could muster. When traveling through the Ruins, he often put on a show of being weak. When he actually got close to other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, he would suddenly summon all of his subordinates.

"Kill him! Let's see if he dares to flee through this region at high speed like before!" Elder God Skysouth pointed straight towards Ning.

He was no fool. Last time, when the two had fought each other, Skysouth

had quickly realized that this ‘Sentinel’ was a formidable expert who had the power of a truly transcendent Elder God in power. Thus, this time he immediately ordered all hundred of his Elder Gods to attack! Last time, Ning had been able to escape because they were in the swamps; this time, they were in a much more dangerous region. Logically speaking, he wouldn’t dare to flee at such high speed through it.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The hundred Elder Gods all immediately charged towards Ning.

“Him?” The fleeing Flamefairy, Su Youji, was glancing backwards as well. She saw that Elder God Skysouth had come to a halt and had instead turned his attention towards a white-robed youth.

She recognized that youth.

Over a year ago, this youth had flown past her. However, the two had only exchanged glances, not words.

“He’s in danger.” In her heart, Su Youji was definitely cheering for Ji Ning. She was filled with anger and hatred towards Elder God Skysouth.

Faced with a hundred attacking Elder Gods, Ning drew a thin, slender sword. This was the flexible Dao sword he had acquired earlier. It could be used as either a soft weapon or a hard weapon, and its slenderness made it very suitable for intricate, unpredictable sword-arts.

Whoosh.

Not only did Ning not flee, he instead charged straight towards the hundred.

“He isn’t fleeing?”

“He’s courting death.”

The hundred Elder Gods were filled with confidence. They didn’t fear anyone below the World-level of power in a frontal clash. Alright, perhaps they might fear one of those legendary monsters who could defeat World-level experts despite being mere Elder Gods...but what were the chances of

running into such a figure?

“Kill!” “Die!” Saber-light and axe-light flashed through the air, howling towards Ning.

Swoosh.

Ning suddenly dramatically sped up, instantly surpassing the speed of light as he shot out in a solitary arc, moving past all hundred Elder Gods. The Elder Gods wanted to hack at him with their weapons, but none of them were able to attack faster than the speed of light. They couldn't even touch the hem of Ning's clothes, to say nothing of Ning himself. Ning easily moved past them.

Swoosh. Ning flew straight towards Elder God Skysouth.

“How?! Impossible!” Elder God Skysouth was truly frightened now. There were very few experts capable of moving faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. Generally speaking, only World Gods were capable of this! The Lord of All Fiends was one of the very few exceptions. He was so ridiculously fast that even Mother Nuwa, who had just become a World God, was unable to catch up to him.

“Stop him!” Skysouth hurriedly directed his six bodyguards to defend him.

“Quick, all of you come back!” He hurriedly ordered the rest of the hundred Elder Gods to return as well.

Whoosh. Ning had arrived.

The six bodyguards all readied their various weapons and treasures, using them to attack Ning.

“Gotta hold. Gotta hold! If I can hold for just a few moments, my Elder God Formation will make it back here.” Elder God Skysouth hurriedly manifested a three-headed, six-armed form as well. Each of his six arms wielded a long hook, and he sought to use them to defend and buy himself some time.

But alas, the white-robed youth had already arrived.

Sword-light flashed.

The attacks of the six bodyguards all missed. They did their best but were unable to even so much as touch Ning.

Slash! A sword suddenly stabbed at Elder God Skysouth's throat. Because he wore a protective suit of armor, the sword wasn't able to pierce through his throat, but...the powerful force contained within Ning's sword was powerful enough to cause Skysouth's body to be instantly disintegrated.

"You-..." Skysouth stared in disbelief at the white-robed Ning. How could this be? Even during their previous battle, this Sentinel had been limited to the speed of light. His sword-arts weren't as fast as they were now either! Why was he so terrifyingly strong this time?

But of course, he had no idea that the azureflower mist energy in Ning's body had made him both stronger and faster, allowing him to easily overpower the limits of the Heavenly Daos with his sword through raw strength. Ning's sword-arts were profound to begin with, and this time they were significantly faster than before.

Whoosh.

Skysouth's body completely disintegrated. How could someone like him possibly endure a head-on sword-strike by a World-level expert?

His six bodyguards, his two female servants, his hundred Elder God slaves...their eyes instantly turned dim and all signs of life vanished from their bodies. They were slaves. Long ago, their lives had become inextricably linked to the life of their master! This was a way of ensuring that slaves would truly work hard to protect their masters. If their master died, they would not be able to escape death.

"To tell you the truth, you actually had a chance at staying alive." Ning began glancing through the treasures which Elder God Skysouth had left behind. "If you had kept those hundred Elder Gods around you at all times, I wouldn't have been able to get you."

World-level experts were able to move faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. How, then, would a hundred Elder Gods in a formation be



able to fight back against such a foe? All other methods were suicidal; the only method was to defeat motion with stillness.

If Elder God Skysouth had ordered the hundred Elder Gods to stay around him and protect him at all times, there was no way Ning would've been able to breach such a turtle-shell defense. However, Skysouth had been so confident in his ability to defeat anyone aside from a World-level figure that he had ordered all hundred Elder Gods to attack instead. This rendered his own defenses vulnerable enough that any World-level expert would be capable of effortlessly dodging past the Elder God formation to slay him!

Skysouth couldn't really be blamed. How could he have ever imagined that Ji Ning was this strong?

"B-but..." The distant Su Youji was completely dazed by what she saw. "He flies faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos, his sword-arts are faster than the speed of light, and his blows are so powerful as to destroy an Elder God's armor-protected body. Seven Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals fought against him, but they weren't even able to touch his sword...what the hell level is this guy at?!"

# Chapter 28: The First Retainer

“He can break through the limits of the Heavenly Daos as he pleases.”

“Quite a few of Elder God Skysouth’s servants were supreme Elder Gods, but they were still unable to so much as touch him. They were like toddlers facing off against a giant.” Su Youji was truly stunned by what she had just seen.

Prior to mastering the Nine Chaos Seals and manifesting the azureflower seal, even if Ning had Violetjewel on him he would’ve still had to use it to block the enemy’s weapons. This time, however, he had the azureflower energy powering his body, upgrading it considerably and making it much faster in every way. His enhanced body was fast, his sword was fast, and his sword-arts were incredibly profound. This was why his enemies hadn’t even been able to touch him.

“Is he a World-level expert?”

“But he clearly is an Elder God. His Elder God aura is very noticeable. I saw him just a few years ago; he definitely was an Elder God back then. There’s no mistaking it at all.” Su Youji’s heart was shaking.

She had suddenly thought of something.

It was fairly easy for most Elder Gods to become ranked as ‘standard’ Elder Gods or ‘elite’ Elder Gods. ‘Supreme’ Elder Gods would be considered experts. As for ‘transcendent’ Elder Gods, they were truly formidable figures, and the generals of the Fogstone Army were all at that level. When they used certain weapons or certain explosive techniques, they might even be able to temporarily reach the World level of power. When Ning had first gone to Fogstone, he was just barely at the World God level of power when he used Violetjewel. However, if he had battled against a true World God, he probably would’ve been defeated in a single blow.

But according to the legends...

There were some true monsters who could accomplish the impossible!

They were truly invincible amongst Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals...and some of them were so terrifyingly strong as to be able to slay even World Gods and Chaos Immortals! However, less than one in a million Elder Gods would ever reach such a level of power.

“I actually ended up running this one of those legendary monsters.” Su Youji grew excited.

Someone like Ning was capable of fighting against World-level experts despite merely being an Elder God and Ancestral Immortal. Once he became a World God, he would instantly become one of the most elite of World Gods!

“If I miss an opportunity like this, I’ll regret it for the rest of my life.” Su Youji quickly came to her decision.

All this seemed to happen in slow motion, but in truth it happened in an instant.

After slaying Skysouth, Ning waved his hand and caused the corpses of thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals to be swept into his storage treasure. After putting them away, he said, “I’ll find a suitable burial ground for some of these corpses in this estate-world. The deceased figures had all died on their own paths of Immortal cultivation; Ning would rather bury them than allow their corpses to remain there in the air. He wanted to build a special graveyard for Immortals and Fiendgods here, so as to constantly remind himself that his path was a perilous one that required the utmost of caution.

“Fellow Daoist!” The distant fiery-robed Flamefairy immediately flew towards him.

Ning turned his head to glance at her, immediately recognizing her. He had encountered her a few years ago when he had first entered this region. He nodded slightly. “It seems we truly do have a bit of fate connecting us.”

“Indeed.” Su Youji said curiously, “Don’t you recognize me?”

“You are...?” Ning looked at her.

Ning had only purchased a single star map, one which primarily

explained the various major organizations located within the Badlands Territory. It focused on the World-level experts as well as a few incredibly powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. As for the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who spent most of their time roaming and adventuring, there was very little information regarding them. This was why Ning wasn't able to immediately recognize figures such as Elder God Skysouth.

Hellsword had belonged to one of the local organization; he was simply out on a brief adventure. This was why Ning recognized him.

"My name is Su Youji. Most people refer to me as the 'Flamefairy'," Su Youji said.

"You can simply address me as Sunrise," Ning said.

"Oh." Su Youji looked at Ning, her eyes shining. "Fellow Daoist Sunrise, would you be willing to accept me as your retainer?"

"Retainer?" Ning was startled for a moment before understanding that the Flamefairy must have seen him slay Elder God Skysouth. He had long ago heard that some extremely powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would have other such figures be willing to serve them as retainers. However, it was incredibly rare for someone to voluntarily offer to join someone in such a fashion!

"I'm a Ki Refiner but I am comparable to a supreme Elder God," Su Youji said hurriedly. "I've trained for less than a million years and stand a chance of becoming a World-level expert."

A retainer who had a chance of becoming a World-level expert was completely different from one who did not.

"Oh?" Ning carefully scrutinized Su Youji.

He did indeed wish to acquire some retainers; in fact, if he wasn't able to find enough, he would go and purchase some slaves. Although he was now very powerful, even World-level experts had need of an army of cultivators, to say nothing of him. An army of a thousand Elder Gods in a formation could very well slay even a World-level figure! However, this

was mostly dependent on the strength of the combination formation as well as sturdy Immortal estates that could resist outside attacks.

This allowed them to both attack or retreat in relatively safety. Who wouldn't want such an army?

However, a formation that could use a thousand Elder Gods or a thousand Ancestral Immortals wasn't easily acquired. Even if Ning did manage to acquire one, he would need a number of commanders who had reached very high levels of comprehension in the Dao.

"A Ki Refiner?" Ning looked at Su Youji. "Attack me using your most powerful techniques. If I find you acceptable, you may be my retainer."

"Alright." Su Youji's eyes lit up. "Be careful."

"Go!" Su Youji raised her milky-white hand, pointing towards Ning with a finger as red light flashed in her eyes.

BOOM!!! Nine streaks of fiery red light simultaneously shot out around her. If one carefully inspected them, one would see that every single stream of fiery red light was actually formed from an enormous number of fiery blades. These nine streams of fiery red light joined together into a perfect whole, coming to form a beautiful, nine-tailed bird. The bird's entire body blazed with flames as it charged straight towards Ning.

It had an aura of tremendous power and incomparable dominance.

"She's merely an Ancestral Immortal, yet she has such tremendous power. And I have the feeling...that this technique hasn't revealed its full power yet." Ning instantly understood that the Flamefairy had been telling the truth. She did indeed possess a high level of insight; in this regard, she was probably comparable to transcendent Elder Gods in power. However, because she was a Ki Refiner and didn't have access to any powerful divine abilities, in battle she was merely comparable to a supreme Elder God.

Ning stretched out with his right hand. It increased dramatically in length, transforming to become dozens of meters in size as his palm became as crystalline as jade.

BOOM!

The nine-tailed firebird slammed directly against Ning's palm. Countless sparks of fiery light appeared on the surface of Ning's palm, but in the end the firebird was completely destroyed while Ning's palm was completely undamaged.

"I wasn't even able to shake him." Su Youji was secretly shocked by what she saw. "So he's this powerful, even in terms of just raw strength?"

When Ning had killed Elder God Skysouth, he had focused on speed and sword-arts. This time, he revealed his terrifying raw strength.

"Mm." Ning looked at Su Youji and nodded. "Very well. I'll accept you as my retainer. Here's an oathstone. Take a look for yourself."

There were two types of retainer relationships.

The first type of relationship was like the one between Saber and Godfiend Witherspike. His status had been nearly identical to that of his master's. In this type of relationship, both the master and the retainer would swear lifeblood oaths; only then would the two trust each other. But of course, the master's lifeblood oath would be much looser.

The second type of retainer involved a relationship like the one between Daolord Windsourc and some of his World Gods. Those World Gods had chosen to serve him in the hopes that he would provide them with guidance and tutelage. They naturally had a much lower status than him. All of them had to swear lifeblood oaths to Daolord Windsourc, but the Daolord naturally would never swear one to them. Whenever he was in the mood, he would occasionally impart them with a bit of guidance. That would be enough to make those World Gods delirious with joy.

The relationship between Ning and Su Youji belonged to the first type.

Su Youji feared just one thing...that Ji Ning would force himself upon her. Her [Libertine Dream] technique was one which required her to be a virgin until the day she became a World God. Given how strong Ning was, if he wanted to force himself upon her there was no way she'd be able to fight back.

When Ning heard Su Youji's request, he felt absolutely speechless. Still, in the end he just chuckled and swore the oath.

"Youji greets you, Master." After the two swore their lifeblood oaths, the relationship between them had changed permanently. Su Youji beamed at Ning as she bowed, her smile filled with endless charm.

Ning nodded and smiled as well. "You are the very first retainer I've ever accepted."

"You'll definitely accept more and more in the future, Master." Su Youji's eyes were shining with light. "But I'll always be your first."

"Let's go. We're going to leave the Ruins," Ning said. "Oh, right. My true Daoist name is 'Darknorth'. 'Sunrise' is just a Daoist name I'm temporarily using."

"As you wish, Master." Su Youji followed by Ning's side, but in her heart she was mumbling to herself, "Darknorth? Darknorth?"

The two travelled more than ten thousand kilometers through the mountain range before finally reaching a region where the skies were filled with mist.

"Let's go."

Swoosh. Swoosh.

The two immediately soared into the skies, flying into the mist. They then disappeared into thin air.

The Windsourc Ruins were perpetually shrouded in clouds and mist. Whenever you found a place in the dangerous areas or in the swamps where you could see the mist, all you had to do was fly into the mist and you would be able to leave! This was something everyone knew about the Windsourc Ruins.

The Eastcalm Mountains. The Sunrise Courtyard.

Two streaks of light descended upon the courtyard.

"This is my residence," Ning said.

“You live here on the Windsource Chaosworld, Master?” Su Youji was surprised.

“Right. I’m a Sentinel of Fogstone,” Ning said. He couldn’t help but let out a sigh. He had spent quite a few years wandering the Ruins, but Elder God Mountain Eater and the other soldiers stationed here had never sought him out. Ning had ordered that they were to immediately contact him if the forces of God Emperor Blacklotus invaded. Once they shattered the message talisman which Ning had given them, Ning would immediately know what had happened and would return from the Ruins.

Still, it made sense. He had spent a hundred years in training without any attacks occurring. This most recent adventure had only lasted a few years.

“Choose a place for yourself to live in,” Ning instructed.

“Yes, Master.” Su Youji turned her head to glance at a nearby room, then pointed towards it and said, “Then I’ll live right over here.”

Ning nodded, then retired to his own private rooms. He began to carefully inspect the treasures he had acquired during this journey through the Ruins. He had acquired quite a few treasures, as well as several storage-type treasures which he hadn’t even had the chance to inspect carefully yet.



# Chapter 29: Reaping the Rewards

Half a day later.

Ji Ning was seated by himself at the highest point on the mountain where the Sunrise Courtyard was located. He was staring at the vast skies, the chains of mountains, and the distant plains.

“I really made a killing this time!” Ning let out a blissful sigh.

Ning had already bound all of the treasures he had acquired in the Ruins, including the storage treasures. He had also completely finished sorting through the items in the storage treasures as well. There had indeed been a number of unexpected surprises for Ning, such as a Chaos-level estate-treasure which Ning suspected was originally owned by a World-level expert!

This was because this estate-treasure actually had a pair of Dao weapons within it! It also had a star map and a jade slip containing information regarding the Windsource Ruins, both of which seemed to be far better than what an Ancestral Immortal or Elder God should be capable of acquiring.

The star map included records of the Badlands Territory and five nearby territories, with the Badlands Territory having the most detailed markings. Every Elder God and Ancestral Immortal who had even the slightest bit of renown was recorded down within this star map, including even the newer ones like Su Youji the Flamefairy. Generally speaking, only World-level experts could acquire star maps of such detail which covered such a vast expanse.

And that jade slip! The World-level expert who originally owned it must have sought out a great deal of information regarding the Windsource Ruins, as the jade slip contained detailed records of the Ruins, describing the outermost swamp region, the outer region, the inner region, and the core region.

The outer region was the dangerous area where Ning had encountered Su Youji. It was a place where Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals often

ventured through.

The inner region included the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc. Many of the World-level servants of Daolord Windsourc had been stationed in the inner region and had died there as well. The inner region was far more dangerous than the outer region.

The core region was the place where Daolord Windsourc had lived. Not even Daolord Badlands or Waterwind had dared to venture too deeply into that place.

“If we add in these two Dao weapons I found in that estate-treasure, I now have a total of five Dao weapons.” Ning was absolutely delighted.

Elder God Skysouth had left quite a few things behind after he died. The most precious item he had left behind was his Elder God Formation, but he had also left behind over a hundred Chaos treasures. Alas, he didn’t even have a single Dao weapon.

What Ning didn’t know was that Elder God Skysouth had actually found a Dao weapon many years ago. Knowing himself to be too weak to make proper use of it, Skysouth feared that other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would just take it from him! Thus, he instead sold the Dao weapon, using the proceeds to purchase many Elder God slaves as well as an Elder God Formation. Instantly, he became virtually invincible against anyone weaker than a World-level expert.

“Five Dao weapons, one Elder God Formation, and over three hundred Chaos treasures.” Ning nodded to himself. These were the main proceeds of this adventure.

“Five Dao weapons, with that warblade being the most valuable of the five. It should be considered a top-grade Dao weapon and is most likely worth roughly fifty cubes of chaos nectar.” Ning continued to quietly calculate mentally. “The other four all combined are probably worth fifty cubes as well! An Elder God Formation meant for a hundred Elder Gods is probably worth roughly ten cubes. As for the three hundred Chaos treasures, some are high-quality while some are low-quality. They are probably worth roughly ten bottles of chaos nectar on average, for a total

of around ten cubes.”

“All combined...they should be worth more than a hundred cubes!”

Ning sighed in amazement.

A single cube of chaos nectar was equivalent to a thousand bottles! A hundred cubes...that was comparable to the total networth of an ordinary World-level expert!

This was what made adventuring in these places so alluring!

Just the tiniest part of the fortune left behind in the ruins of a deceased Daolord was comparable to the networth of an ordinary World God!

And yet, the danger level in such a place was similarly high. As soon as Ning had entered the Ruins, he had been beset by dangers. He had damn near died when the windbeasts had chased after him. The only reason why he was able to safely return to the ‘outer region’ was because he had stupid good luck, resulting in him finding and entering that private estate.

To safely leave the inner region was incredibly difficult. Only around half of the World Gods who entered the place would be able to leave alive.

But for those who did manage to leave...almost every single one of them returned with great rewards.

“So many treasures...this should be enough to repair my sword, Violetjewel,” Ning mused to himself. Even if he used up all of the treasures, Ning wouldn’t feel any heartache. This was because Violetjewel was a weapon that had a quintessence core!

“Master.” The fiery-robed Su Youji walked out. As she looked at the seated white-robed youth, she felt quite happy.

She had been pursued by Elder God Skysouth for so long. Whenever she thought of his ugly smile and his demand for her to become his pleasure-companion, she felt extremely repulsed. When she looked at the seated Ning, she could sense the distance between the two of them.

There were many cultivators who tried to befriend her and move closer to her, hoping that they would have the chance to enjoy ‘the joy of fish

when entering the sea'. But Ning, however, only gave her a feeling of distance. Clearly, he didn't wish to be too intimate with her.

"Oh?" Ning turned his head to look at her. "Right. If you aren't busy, accompany me on a trip to Fogstone."

"Fogstone?" Su Youji was startled for a moment, then smiled beautifully. "Alright. When?"

"Right now," Ning said.

Ning deeply desired to completely repair Violetjewel and restore it to its full level of power. According to the books he had read as well as the notes left behind by World God Northrest, weapons that had quintessence cores were incredibly marvelous. They surpassed all ordinary weapons and stood at a completely different level of existence.

Immortal cultivators of Ning's level focused on attuning to certain essences, such as how Ning was attuning to the true essence of the sword in the hopes of reaching a higher level of skill with it.

However, Violetjewel had such an essence within it! This quintessence core was the most valuable part of Violetjewel. The stories regarding weapons like Violetjewel were simply too obscure and mystical; Ning wanted to see it for himself!

Ning and Su Youji flew together within his ship, departing from the Windsource Chaosworld and heading towards Fogstone.

Fogstone.

Last time Ning had come to this place, he had been an outsider. This time, he was a general of the Fogstone Army. He was considered one of them and there was no need for someone to guide him around.

"Greetings, seniors. What sort of treasures might you need?"

They were within an enormous hall inside an island. This hall was filled with many beautiful maids, with one being on the True Immortal level. When she sensed Ji Ning and Su Youji's auras, she immediately became extremely hospitable. This place was extremely important. It was the

central location for people to sell treasures to Fogstone. Because it was located in the heart of Fogstone, the forces of Fogstone didn't really worry about anyone causing trouble here.

Ning waved his hand, producing his general's insignia.

"General?" The violet-robed female True Immortal's attitude became even more respectful.

"How many treasure fragments do you have here?" Ning asked.

To repair Violetjewel, he would need Five Elements essence.

The cheapest way to acquire Five Elements essence was to purchase treasure fragments from already-destroyed treasures. A more expensive solution would be to purchase undamaged ingredients, while the most extravagant way was to purchase undamaged artifacts and treasures.

"Treasure fragments?" The violet-robed female wouldn't dare to lie to one of Fogstone's generals. She immediately said, "There aren't many cultivators who need treasure fragments. Most who purchase them do so to extract Five Elements essence from them to repair other treasures. As a result, our entire stockpile is worth less than a cube of chaos nectar. However, this should be more than enough to repair a Dao weapon."

The violet-robed woman was privately guessing that this general was intent on repairing a Dao weapon.

"Less than a cube?" Ning was no longer the ignorant child he had been when he was in the Three Realms. A treasure with a quintessence core that had been almost completely wrecked internally would require an enormous amount of Five Elements essence if one wanted to repair it. If he was to purchase raw ingredients rather than treasure fragments, even a hundred cubes of chaos nectar might not be enough.

Purchasing treasure fragments was a better path to success.

"That's it...?" Ning frowned, but this was as he had expected. Fogstone only had nine World-level experts. Why would it see the need to store so many treasure fragments here?

“Let’s go.” Ning led Su Youji away.

He wasn’t worried about openly asking for treasure fragments here on Fogstone. Everyone on their side was bound by a lifeblood oath preventing fratricide. This was one of the reasons why Ning had chosen to come to Fogstone.

“It seems I’ll have to pay a visit to the Badlands Everworld if I wish to acquire enough treasure fragments to repair Violetjewel,” Ning mused silently to himself. “I can be a bit more relaxed here on Fogstone, but I’ll have to be careful when I’m in the Badlands Everworld. If I’m too arrogant and end up catching the wrong person’s attention, I can very well die.”

Although Ning was going to be vigilant, he wasn’t scared.

“Youji.”

The two were within a flying warship that soared through the space outside Fogstone. Ning said to the nearby Su Youji, “I’m preparing to pay a visit to the Badlands Everworld.”

“I’ll go wherever you go, Master.” Su Youji laughed. “And I’ve visited the Badlands Everworld before. I’m quite familiar with the place. Although I was just there once, I have to admit that it truly is a remarkable and marvelous place. Many cultivators reside there, and even the most powerful organization of the Badlands Territory, Badlands Court , is located there.

“Mm.” Ning nodded.

The flying warship continued to advance through space towards the distant Sevenwater Star. From there, they would be able to make use of a spacetime transfer array that would send them directly to the Badlands Everworld!

# Chapter 30: First Visit to an Everworld

Sevenwater Star was a long distance away from the planet of Fogstone. After reaching it, they had to wait for another year before the spacetime transfer array was activated. Thus, it took them two years before they were able to reach the Badlands Everworld. This was actually quite a short period of time, and the reason why the transfer happened so quickly was because the Badlands Everworld was a fairly high-traffic location. The Badlands Everworld was the center of the entire Badlands Territory and held the most powerful organizations in the region.

Whoosh.

Ji Ning and the other cultivators appeared within the spacetime transfer array. As for Flamefairy Su Youji, Ning had naturally been stored her away into his estate-world.

“So this is the Badlands Everworld?” Ning walked out of the array, staring at the vast world that had appeared before him. He waved his hand, causing Su Youji to appear next to him.

“Can you feel it?” When Su Youji appeared, she smiled as she looked at Ning.

“Yes...”

Ning nodded slowly. “What an odd feeling.”

Ning was now powerful enough to easily destroy most chaosworlds. However, the Badlands Everworld gave Ning an impression of exalted majesty, a sense of all-encompassing grace that was completely ineffable.

“I really can’t fly here.” Ning tried to fly but couldn’t, no matter what he did.

“How marvelous. This place is exactly as the legends said it is. Supposedly, the skies have been completely sealed in the Badlands Everworld. There really is no way to fly through the air here.” Each time Ning tried to fly into the air, a strange, unfathomable sort of law seemed to exert its power upon him, making it impossible for him to fly.

According to the legends, when each everworld was first created by their powerful creators, certain Laws would be set down.

For example, there might be a 'flamebane'. This meant that all fire-attribute types of power would be completely unusable within that everworld.

Or for another example, there might be a 'swordbane'. This meant that even the most formidable of experts in the Dao of the Sword would find themselves unable to summon the energy of the true essence of the sword. In fact, they wouldn't even be able to draw their swords!

There could be some other special Laws as well. So long as the creator of the everworld set down that rule, all others who came to the everworld would be forced to follow it.

One of the Laws of the Badlands Everworld was its 'skybane'. No living creatures were able to fly here, not even winged creatures like birds! Nothing and no one could fly in this world.

Of course, if you were incredibly powerful, you might be capable of resisting this law. Daolord Badlands, for example, might be strong enough to force his way into the air...but of course, that was just conjecture. No one had ever seen Daolord Badlands flying about within the Badlands Everworld. The only reason why people thought he might be capable of disobeying the Law was because everyone here felt the utmost of respect for Daolord Badlands' abilities! However, it was also equally possible that not even the Daolord was capable of flying here.

As for others?

No World-level expert was capable of overcoming a local Law, to say nothing of an Ancestral Immortal or Elder God.

"Still, the everworld is a very comfortable place," Ning said softly. "This world is incredibly deep and dense. It feels as though it embraces all visitors with warmth and kindness, bringing peace to their hearts."

"This is a reason why so many cultivators like to live here within the Badlands Everworld and why so many organizations want to take this



place over. However, only the most powerful organization of all, the Badlands Court, is qualified to rule this place!” Su Youji said.

“Come. Let us go find Waveshift City.” Ning immediately strode forward.

The two walked shoulder-to-shoulder as they advanced at tremendous speed.

Waveshift City was the largest, most bustling city of the Badlands Everworld. It was indescribably old, and it had existed ever since the Badlands Everworld itself had first come into being! Naturally, this made it far older than the so-called Badlands Court, which had merely destroyed the previous occupant of this everworld, took it over, and changed its name to be the ‘Badlands Everworld’.

Waveshift City was quite close to the spacetime transfer array.

Ning and the Flamefairy merely had to walk for roughly an hour before arriving at the base of the mountains around Waveshift City.

“Quite high.” Ning raised his head to stare upwards.

This was a mountain that was a million kilometers tall, its peaks wreathed in white clouds and crowned with an enormous city. Waveshift City.

“Let’s hike up the mountain,” Ning chuckled. “It’s been a long time since I’ve gone hiking.”

“We have to walk our way up step by step. I feel just like a mortal.” Su Youji grinned as well.

The mountain path was a sinuous one that coiled around the mountain peak, slowly guiding travelers upwards. If Ning was able to fly, he would’ve flown straight up to the peak of the mountain. Instead, he now had to slowly hike up one step at a time. Within the everworld, flight simply didn’t work.

“This everworld is truly vast, far larger than any chaosworld.” As Ning hiked up the mountain, he couldn’t help but let out a sigh. “I hear that the everworld has many ancient ruins located inside it.”

“Yes.” Su Youji nodded. “I heard there are more than ten.”

There were more than ten ancient ruins within the Badlands Everworld which had never been fully conquered! This was because the Badlands Everworld was simply far too vast.

“Here we are.” Su Youji pointed towards their front.

The mountain peak itself was just a few hundred kilometers around, but it held up an enormous city that spanned hundreds of thousands of kilometers. The city almost looked as though it was hanging precariously in the air, ready to tip at a moment’s notice. Ning and Youji followed the mountain path forward, walking towards the gates.

The walls of the city were engraved with two words ‘Wave’ ‘Shift’.

“Waveshift...” Ning raised his head to look at those two words, sensing the incredibly arcane ripples emanating from within them.

Those ripples were simply too hard to lock down. Just trying made Ning feel tired and extremely uncomfortable. The difference in power was simply too great. Ning quickly tried to give up attuning to those ripples, but was unable to break free from the endless might that radiated out from those two words.

“Urgh.” Ning vomited out a mouthful of blood before finally coming back to his senses.

“Master, don’t you know that you must not stare at those two words?” The Flamefairy asked.

“I know, but I still wanted to take a look. I won’t die just because I looked at them, right?” Ning laughed. “They truly are incredible. Those two words made me vomit up blood just because I looked at them. I wasn’t able to glean any insight into them at all, just a feeling that they are unfathomably profound.” According to the legends, even World Gods who stared at those two words would vomit up blood, to say nothing of someone like Ji Ning.

Generally speaking, if you took over an everworld you would change its name.

The Badlands Court had taken over this everworld and had thus renamed it to be the 'Badlands Everworld'. However, they hadn't changed the name of the most prosperous city of this everworld, precisely because those two words 'Wave' 'Shift' were completely inviolable. Those two words served as the core of the entire city and possessed utterly supreme power. So long as those two words remained on the walls, all other cultivators would continue to call this place 'Waveshift City', no matter who tried to change its name.

Thus, there were many cultivators who suspected that when the Badlands Everworld was first established a long, long time ago, its original name might've been the Waveshift Everworld.

"No one knows who wrote those two words." The Flamefairy let out a sigh. "That person might well be more powerful than even Daolord Badlands."

"Mm." Ning nodded.

It made sense.

There were differences in power even amongst Daolords. Didn't Daolord Windsour have a Daolord amongst his retainers?

Ning's heart began to beat slightly faster as he thought about that ancient, powerful figure. A few moments later, he turned and entered Waveshift City alongside Su Youji. Waveshift City was an incredibly prosperous city, and it had one simple rule: All combat within city limits was forbidden! Anyone who violated this rule would instantly suffer automatic attacks from the formations protecting Waveshift City.

"What a bustling place." As Ning walked through the wide streets, he could see Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals everywhere. As for True Gods and True Immortals, there was a ridiculous number of them located here.

"I would imagine that almost half of the cultivators of the entire Badlands Territory are gathered here," Su Youji said. "Waveshift City even holds more than a thousand World-level experts!"

Ning nodded. This was a place of power and safety. No one would dare to attack you here.

However, once you left the city, no one would care if you lived or you died.

“Is that the Palace of Ten Thousand Treasures?” Ning stared off into the distance. Far away, at the ends of the street, there lay an utterly enormous palace that glowed with absolutely breathtaking light. The entire palace emanated many ripples of power, each of which represented the presence of a Dao weapon. The ripples which the palace were intentionally radiating out numbered over a hundred.

“Yes, that’s the Palace of Ten Thousand Treasures. It holds more treasures within it than any other place within Waveshift City. Here, you can buy whatever treasures you desire! You can have Dao weapons custom made for you, or even be able to purchase one of those legendary treasures with a quintessence core inside of it. So long as you are willing to pay the price, you can buy anything...but of course, the price of such a weapon would be truly terrifying.” Su Youji let out a sigh.

Ning nodded. He knew that the master of this Palace was actually Daolord Badlands himself!

Daolord Badlands could capture a few dozen World Gods, then enslave them and sell them off, but they still wouldn’t be as valuable as a single treasure with a quintessence core. The price of such a treasure was unimaginable, enough to drive even a World God completely mad.

“What do you plan to buy or sell, Master? You can do it all here. This place is extremely safe, and the Palace will never reveal your secrets,” the Flamefairy sent mentally.

“I know.” But in his heart, Ning silently muttered to himself – Bullshit.

Yes, the Palace was an extremely safe place where he could sell off his Dao weapons to acquire a hundred cubes of chaos nectar; the Palace wouldn’t really care much about it. But if he was to directly purchase ‘treasure fragments’ from them in large quantity, everyone would be able to guess that Ning had a treasure which required significant amounts of

Five Elements essence to repair!

Daolord Badlands had an exalted status here; there was naturally no way he could possibly switch positions and decide to come here to run the shop. The ones in charge of this place were most likely World Gods or Chaos Immortals...and Violetjewel was a treasure that would attract attention from any World-level expert, some of whom would actually stare at Ning from afar.

There was no such thing as the old nonsense saying about 'one's word is priceless'. Everything had a price to it; the only question was how high. A magic treasure that had a quintessence core was valuable enough that many Elder Gods and Chaos Immortals would be willing to sacrifice anything, face included, to acquire it.

"I have to spend a little bit of thought on this," Ning mused to himself.

# Chapter 31: Magic Treasure Fragments

A short while later, Ji Ning walked into the Palace of Ten Thousand Treasures by himself, having had Flamefairy Su Youji enter his estate-world.

“What do you wish to purchase, fellow Daoist?” As soon as Ning walked in, a violet-robed female cultivator with the aura of an Ancestral Immortal greeted him with a smile.

Ning swept the palace with his gaze. It was filled with violet-robed male and female Immortals, all of whom were at the Elder God or Ancestral Immortal level. This was a testament to how wealthy the Badlands Court was! The treasures here ranged from Protocosmic spirit-treasures to Dao treasures, and there were more than a thousand display tables filled with those treasures.

This particular violet-robed Ancestral Immortal fell into place behind Ning, following him.

“I’m here to sell treasures,” Ning sent mentally. “I’m selling a Dao weapon.”

“A Dao weapon?” The violet-robed woman gave Ning a surprised glance, then also switched to speaking mentally. “It seems you’ve made some great gains while adventuring, fellow Daoist. Please follow me.”

Soon, Ning was led towards a side hall.

“My uncle-master shall arrive shortly,” the violet-robed Immortal said. The Badlands Territory was a vast place, and every so often there would be a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who were lucky enough to acquire Dao weapons while adventuring. Hundreds of them might die in their adventures, but every so often one would luck out. This wasn’t that uncommon, and given how vast the entire Badlands Territory was, a surprising number of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had Dao weapons.

Generally speaking, they would go to the Palace to sell off the Dao

weapons and trade for other treasures they needed. Daolord Badlands was behind the Palace; there was no need for them to worry about their security here.

“Uncle-master,” the violet-robed woman called out respectfully.

A white-robed, white-haired old man walked in, and the aura which rippled off of him was completely different from that of an Elder God’s or an Ancestral Immortal’s. Ning suspected that this had to be a Chaos Immortal.

“Senior,” Ning immediately said respectfully. Any Chaos Immortal admitted to the Badlands Court had to be an extraordinary figure.

“Take your Dao weapons out and let me have a look,” the white-robed Chaos Immortal said with a smile.

Ning waved his hand.

Whoosh.

Instantly, four Dao weapons appeared in the air before him. There was a warblade, a quill pen, and a pair of long shuttles.

Actually, Ning had acquired five Dao weapons. However, Ning had taken a liking to the flexible sword and thus was unwilling to part with it for now. Even if he sold it, he’d only gain access to roughly ten cubes of Chaos nectar.

“This warblade...” The white-robed Chaos Immortal’s eyes lit up as he nodded slowly. “Not bad.”

He didn’t seem to pay much attention to the other three items.

“I also have an Elder God Formation.” Ning also produced the Elder God Formation he had acquired from Elder God Skysouth.

“Mm.” The white-robed Chaos Immortal glanced sideways at the Elder God Formation, then ignored it. At his level, only a formation that allowed for a thousand Elder Gods would be of interest. To him, a hundred-man Elder God formation was very unremarkable. In truth, even Ning didn’t care about it that much. Thanks to his azureflower space, Ning was now

capable of fighting a hundred Elder Gods head-on, making the formation of little use to him.

“This blade...this should be a weapon that was nourished through sin, a Sinblade. It is quite excellent.” The white-robed Chaos Immortal nodded. “The others are just so-so. All combined, I’d be willing to give you 105 cubes of chaos nectar.”

After finishing his words, the white-robed Chaos Immortal glanced at Ning, then turned and left.

Chaos Immortals held an exalted status. They would be willing to come out to assess Dao weapons and give a price for them, but they generally wouldn’t actually deal or haggle with Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals.

“As my uncle-master just said, the highest price we can give is 105 cubes of chaos nectar.” The violet-robed female Immortal looked at Ning.

“Fine, then let’s just set the price at 105 cubes.” Ning nodded. Generally speaking, the Palace would make very honest offers, as they disdained from trying to nickel-and-dime weak cultivators like him.

“I also have some Chaos treasures. Quite a few of them, actually. I wish to sell them all.” Ning waved his hand, causing more than three hundred Chaos treasures to instantly appear in the air next to him.

The violet-robed woman was quite calm, as she had seen far too many Chaos treasures in her life. She swept them with her gaze, then smiled as she looked back at Ning. “We can give you three cubes for them, I suppose.”

“Fine.” Ning nodded.

The Chaos treasures were worth roughly what he had thought they would be worth, while the Dao weapons had been worth a bit more than he had expected. It was probably due to the warblade. Ning had thought it to be worth roughly fifty cubes, but he wasn’t sure as to exactly how much it would be worth. It was a top-grade Dao weapon, after all. Some could be bought for fifty cubes while others would require up to a hundred cubes.

“A total of 108 cubes. We will give it to you in the form of chaos nectar



and chaos jewels. Alternately, would you like to receive treasures in trade instead?”

“No need.” Ning shook his head.

Amongst the many Chaos treasures he had acquired was a Chaos-level ‘Five Elements Cauldron’. Ning really didn’t need any particular treasures right now at all. The flexible sword was also more than enough of a weapon for him at present.

“Then please accept this.” A short while later, the violet-robed Immortal returned and gave Ning a storage flask that contained a separate dimension within it which held many bottles of chaos nectar as well as many chaos jewels. As for the flask itself, it was naturally a complimentary gift.

After accepting the flask, Ning turned and left.

“Now...time to buy treasure fragments.” After leaving the Palace, Ning began to ponder on what to buy.

Waveshift City was an extremely busy city. Given that all combat was forbidden in this place and that it was protected by Daolord Badlands as well as an incredibly ancient formation, it could be described as the safest place of the entire Badlands Territory! Thus, this place was loved by cultivators who disliked violence and who wished to calmly focus on their meditations. World-level experts, Elder Gods, Ancestral Immortals, True Gods, True Immortals...an enormous number of them lived here.

However, they needed resources and treasures for cultivation!

Thus, some World-level experts would arrange for their disciples to set up shops here. They’d toss the spoils of war they acquired into the shops for sell.

There were three particularly popular types of shops. The first involved the buying and selling of treasures. The second involved the buying and selling of divine abilities and secret arts. The third involved the buying and selling of slaves.

These were the three types of shops that did the most trade. Although

there were also shops that sold formations, pills, and other things, they weren't quite as popular.

In Waveshift City, there were more than eight hundred shops that engaged in the buying and selling of treasures! Some were established by independent World-level experts while others were established by clans and organizations, such as Fogstone or the Blacklotus Empire.

.....

The sixth day after Ning's arrival at Waveshift City.

The Windflower Hall was a treasure shop owned and operated by the Windflower chaos-kingdom.

A black-robed child walked into the hall.

"Senior." A female True Immortal quickly walked forward to welcome him. Cultivators couldn't be judged by their appearances alone. Although this child looked very young, he had the aura of an Elder God.

"Do you have treasure fragments for sale here?" The black-robed child said.

"We do." The female True Immortal looked at the child. "But not much. Just three cubes worth."

"I wish to buy six hundred bottles worth of treasure fragments," the black-robed child said.

"Alright."

The female True Immortal was quite calm. Treasure fragments weren't popular items, but when people did purchase them they usually purchased them in large quantities. Some large organizations actually bought them in bulk, while other independent cultivators might need them to repair their treasures.

.....

The Ninelights Palace.

"Senior." A white-robed female Celestial Immortal stepped forward.

The muscular man glanced sideways at her. It was quite rare to see a Celestial Immortal in Waveshift City; she most likely had come here alongside her master or her family members.

“I wish to buy treasure fragments, eight hundred bottles worth. Do you have any?” The muscular man sent mentally.

“We do,” the female Celestial Immortal said hurriedly.

.....

A child. A muscular man. An alien Outsider. An elderly man.

Ning transformed into many different forms, using some of the minor techniques and tricks which World God Northrest had imparted to him to mask and disguise his natural aura. Given his power, most Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals wouldn't be able to see through his disguise. Only World Gods and Chaos Immortals would be able to do so, if they gave him a serious look.

In addition, Ning focused on shops and stores that were operated by True Immortals.

Within half a day, he visited over 180 different shops, buying around five hundred to eight hundred bottles worth of treasure fragments. Soon, he had completely spent all 108 cubes of chaos nectar.

.....

The Badlands Everworld. The spacetime transfer array.

“Is this one going to Brightcave Star?” When Ning arrived at the array, he asked this question of a nearby Elder God.

“Yes. It's about to activate immediately.”

“Right.” Ning paid the fee of a bottle of chaos nectar, then stepped into the array.

A short while later, the spacetime transfer array was activated, sending its occupants to Brightcave Star.

Upon reaching Brightcave Star, Ning immediately teleported away. He

found a distant, unoccupied planet, then went into seclusion for three years. Three years later, he rode Brightcave Star's spacetime transfer array and went straight to Sevenwater Star.

After arriving, Ning went straight towards the territory controlled by Fogstone. He returned to the nameless star where he had secreted the prisonworld, then entered it.

Within the prisonworld.

"I'm back." Ning smiled.

He had spent five days in Waveshift City. Only on the sixth day had he gone out shopping for treasure fragments, precisely because he wanted to make immediate use of the spacetime transfer array. Ning had completely memorized the array's schedule, and in this way ensured that no one would have a chance to follow him or chase him!

To be honest, Ning was being excessively cautious. He had changed his appearance and his aura across the hundred-plus shops. As a result, he didn't cause even the slightest stir in Waveshift City, nor had any of the countless cultivators there paid him any special attention.

Still, Ning was right to be careful. One had to be careful as a cultivator; a single act of negligence could very well result in death. It didn't really matter if his true body was killed, but if he lost 108 cubes worth of treasure fragments due to it? Ning would probably want to kill himself out of regret.

This time, he had been quite lucky when journeying through the Ruins. Next time, he might not acquire any treasures at all. Who knew how long it would be before the next time he acquired such a fortune?

Whoosh.

Ning appeared atop a mountain peak. He stared off into the distance, watching as a black-robed Ning flew towards him. This was his true body's backup clone.

"Here we go." Ning revealed a look of anticipation on his face.

As the black-robed Ning landed before him, it produced a blood-colored sword which it tossed to Ning's true body. It was Violetjewel. When Ning had entered the Windsource Ruins, he had stashed Violetjewel away in the prisonworld. He hadn't taken it to the Badlands Everworld either. This was the most important treasure he had, and he had to keep it safe.

Whoosh. Ning waved his hand, causing an enormous Five Elements Cauldron to appear in the air and land on the ground next to him, causing the mountain to tremble.

The white-robed Ning glanced at Violetjewel. It looked fine from the outside, but its insides were so completely mangled that only its quintessence core remained intact. Ning said softly, "Violetjewel...the Five Elements essence from this many treasure fragments should be enough, right?"

He was filled with anticipation. He wanted to see exactly how powerful one of these legendary quintessence weapons were.

# Chapter 32: The Quintessence Core of the Sword

As the Five Elements Cauldron descended upon the mountain peak, it shone with a blindingly bright burst of light that illuminated the entire area.

The white-robed Ji Ning sat down in the lotus position, placing Violetjewel before him.

“Begin!” Ning waved his hand, causing an enormous pile of treasure fragments that was more than thirty meters tall to suddenly appear a short distance away from him. The treasure fragments consisted of broken bits of sabers, swords, beads, ropes, banners, staffs, greataxes, cauldrons, flying boats, Immortal palaces, and other things that were all at least at the Protocosmic spirit-treasure level. After being badly damaged and broken into pieces, they were now much less valuable than they were before, but it was actually even easier to extract energy from them than it was from undamaged treasures. After all, there was now no need to actually grind them apart!

“Go.” Ning sent out a surge of Immortal energy to scoop up the treasure fragments.

Whooooosh! The treasure fragments surged out in a stream, beginning to flood into the Five Elements Cauldron. This was a Chaos-level Five Elements Cauldron, and it quickly reduced the treasure fragments to tiny bits of dust and debris, completely absorbing the Five Elements essence from those treasures and storing it into the cauldron’s storage region. Just ten breaths worth of time later, the entire pile of treasure fragments had been completely used up.

Rumble...a large amount of debris came flying out from the Five Elements Cauldron.

“Again.” Ning once more waved his hand, causing another thirty meter pile of treasure fragments to appear next to him.

The treasure fragments were once more broken apart and transformed into debris, the Five Elements essence having been sucked out of them.

Ning had purchased 108 cubes worth of treasure fragments. 108 cubes of chaos nectar was a sum that was comparable to the entire networth of many ordinary World-level experts, and he had used it all to purchase treasure fragments. The amount of treasure fragments he now had was absolutely extraordinary!

It took six full hours to go through it all! Finally, six hours later, the treasure fragments had been completely consumed.

“Come.” Ning picked up a jade gourd, causing streams of golden yellow energy, watery blue energy, green wood energy, fiery red energy, and dark earthen energy to soar out of the cauldron and into the mouth of the jade gourd. Only after a long period of time was the Five Elements Cauldron completely emptied of Five Elements essence.

Ning waved his hand, putting away the cauldron as well.

“This gourd has 108 cubes worth of Five Elements essence.” Ning hefted the jade gourd in his hands. He had been very lucky, but had still nearly died in the Ruins in order to acquire such a fortune.

“Violetjewel...show me your true power!”

Ning willed it, and Violetjewel suddenly appeared in the air before him. Ning took hold of Violetjewel, then placed it next to the jade gourd. Five Elements essence immediately began to fly out of the jade gourd, flooding straight towards Violetjewel. The essence swirled around Violetjewel before slowly seeping inside of it.

On the surface, Violetjewel looked as though it was in perfect shape. Its internal structure, however, was unbearably mangled. It was like a building that looked pristine from the outside but was filled with shattered support beams; although it looked nice, it was actually quite weak.

By the same principle, Violetjewel looked as though it was in perfect shape from the outside, but it was actually very weak! The only reason why it was still so powerful was because it was simply such a fantastically good

weapon that even in its present state, it could still unleash the power of a Dao weapon.

Crackle...

The damaged internal structures of Violetjewel furiously devoured the Five Elements essence pouring into it. The healing began to occur at a very slow pace, as every single bit of it was very difficult to repair.

The core of the sword was its quintessence. The closer the healing process came to the quintessence core, the more difficult it was to repair it.

Because the surface of the sword had been repaired, the sword was able to absorb Five Elements essence much more quickly than before. As more and more of it was repaired, it began to absorb the Five Elements essence faster and faster as well. However, there was simply so much essence that more than six days and nights passed in the blink of an eye, with Violetjewel continuing to ravenously absorb the essence.

“It has already consumed thirty cubes...it is more than half-healed by now.” Ning actually frowned. “But the closer we get to the core, the harder the repair process will be.”

Another day passed.

“Fifty cubes...it still needs a bit more...”

“Sixty cubes...seventy cubes...still needs a little more...”

The sword was clearly almost completely repaired by now, but as as they drew closer and to the core, the repair difficulty began to increase at a staggering rate.

“Eighty cubes.”

“Ninety cubes.”

“Ninety-five. Ninety-six. Ninety-seven. Ninety-eight!” Ning was carefully attuned to this sword which he bound all those years ago. Finally, the last bit of damage that was located extremely close to the quintessence core was also repaired.



After using up ninety-eight cubes worth of treasure fragments, Ning had finally, completely repaired Violetjewel.

Rumble...

The blood-colored sword hovering in front of Ning emitted a joyful aura. Ning smiled as well, not suppressing the sword and allowing it to burst forth with its true aura of power.

A stream of sword-light that looked like blood-colored water blasted out in every direction.

Whooooooooosh.

As the sword-light howled forth and spread out around Ning, the prisonworld itself began to tremble.

“What?!” Ning was badly shocked.

“This is a prisonworld, a place meant to hold prisoners. When my true body uses the azureflower seal and strikes at full power, it can cause the prisonworld to faintly tremble. But just now...I didn’t even control or activate Violetjewel. Its own natural aura was enough to cause the prisonworld to shudder?!” Ning was stunned.

“This weapon is far more powerful than any Dao weapon! A hundred times more powerful? Perhaps a thousand times more powerful?”

“How powerful would I be if I could control it?!”

As Ning stared at the illusory lake of blood that had spread out around Violetjewel, he was afraid to even imagine how much power this sword truly contained.

“Come over here.” Ning extended his hand.

The aura of bloody sword-light immediately vanished as Violetjewel obediently flew into Ning’s hands.

Reinforced and strengthened by the azureflower energy, Ning poured his divine power into the sword, planning on delivering a full-force strike. But just at that moment...

“Blood and water...”

“A sword like water...a sword like blood...”

An indistinct, unclear voice suddenly spoke out from the quintessence core of the sword. Because Ning’s divine power had filled the sword, he was able to sense this voice in detail.

He could sense the solitary pride contained within the sword’s quintessence core...

In fact, Ning could almost see a solitary, proud figure appear. That lonely figure seemed to wield a sword that caused Ning to feel a sense of awe and veneration. When the intent of that sword exploded forth, it crushed stars, shattered worlds, and wiped out all living beings. Nothing could stop this surge of sword-intent, which seemed to be capable of tearing apart even the primordial chaos itself.

Whoosh.

Ning came back to his senses. Only now did he realize that he had been in a dazed state for fully half a month!

“This sword’s quintessence core...?” Ning had acquired Violetjewel a long time ago, but in the past he had never noticed anything remarkable about its quintessence core. Only after fully repairing Violetjewel did the sword’s quintessence seem to come to life, allowing Ning to get a glimpse of an utterly supreme sword-intent that completely eclipsed the sword-intent left behind by the diagram of the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc Ning had seen years ago.

The only thing Ning had ever seen which could possibly be compared to this surge of sword-intent was the power which had emanated from the words ‘Waveshift’ which he had seen on the walls of Waveshift City.

It was just as exalted and ineffable! In fact, it seemed to carry an aura of perfect and eternity.

“Eternity?” Ning murmured softly to himself, “No wonder this sort of weapon is referred to as an Eternal weapon.”

Chaos weapon.

Dao weapon.

Eternal weapon!

Eternal weapons were weapons that contained their own quintessence cores, which made every single one of them incredibly marvelous and unique. No two Eternal weapons were exactly the same.

Generally speaking, only figures on the level of Daolord Badlands or Daolord Windsource would have access to such weapons! Of course, every so often a lucky junior might be able to acquire such a weapon...such as World God Northrest, who had found an Eternal weapon of his own!

“I have this strange feeling. It is as though the full power of Violetjewel can only be unleashed when I’m able to completely unleash the might of the sword’s quintessence core.” This insight suddenly flashed within Ning’s mind...but the next moment, he just grinned wryly. Completely unleash it? What a joke! One would need utterly incredible insights into the Dao necessary to completely unleash the quintessence core’s power. Ning was far, far from being able to do such a thing.

Fortunately, his path was the Dao of the Sword, and he had his own insights into this Dao.

“Let me test out its power first.” Ning held Violetjewel in his hands as he soared into the skies.

.....

A black-haired old man was seated in the lotus position in a different part of the prisonworld.

Swoosh.

A white-robed youth suddenly flew over from afar.

“Triult.” Ning spoke out.

“Master.” The black-robed elder hurriedly rose to his feet. He had been thoroughly cowed by Ning’s power. By now, all of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals in the entire prisonworld had been subdued by Ning,

while Swordfather Triult was the first one who had submitted to Ning.

“Don’t move,” Ning instructed.

The black-haired elder glanced curiously as Ning walked towards him.

Ning suddenly struck out with his sword. As he did so, it carried the intent of the ‘Killsword stance’ which Ning was working on. Although Ning had yet to master this stance, the bit of insight he did have was able to resonate with Violetjewel’s quintessence core and unleash just a bit of its power, causing it burst forth from Violetjewel.

Ning had the feeling that with a bit of power from Violetjewel’s quintessence, he had the power to break almost anything.

Slash! A blood-colored sword-light flashed through the air.

With a ‘clank’ sound, the translucent black chains connected to the black-haired old man were split in half.

The black-haired elder’s eyes instantly turned huge. “W-what...”

# Chapter 33: Meditating on the Sword

“How is this possible? These chains were personally forged by the King of Pangaea...but he clearly...” The black-haired man stuttered as he stared at Ji Ning in disbelief. Ji Ning was clearly just an Elder God! He still remembered that time a few hundred years ago when Ji Ning came with this very same blood-colored sword and hacked down upon those chains with it. That time, he was only able to leave a few scars behind.

Swordfather Triult had still be quite shocked. The Endwar had just concluded and Ji Ning’s attacks had just barely reached the World God threshold.

Ning was now much stronger than he was before, thanks to the azureflower energy reinforcing his body! He was also striking out with full power using an Eternal weapon that had part of its quintessence unleashed!

The power of this blow was so great that it easily hacked the chains apart. The chains posed no threat to it at all.

“According to what the King of Pangaea said, only a World God or Chaos Immortal is capable of severing these chains, but even then it shouldn’t be an easy task. Is he even more powerful than a newly ascended World-level expert?” The black-haired elder stared at Ning, his heart filled with astonishment. How could an Elder God be this strong?

“Alright. I’ve severed the chains and you can leave this place,” Ning said. “In the future, you can simply accompany me. Once I become a World God, you can choose whether or not you wish to continue to follow me.”

“To be able to follow you is my blessing, Master.” Swordfather Triult spoke with the utmost of respect.

A legendary monster...

An Elder God who was absolutely stronger than a newly ascended World-level expert.

“Mm.” Ning chuckled. He understood that today, Swordfather Triult was

completely sincere in his servitude. In the past, he had only lowered his head because he was forced to and because a lifeblood oath bound him.

Ning glanced down at Violetjewel. Because it was a weapon with a master, he was able to disguise it as a completely ordinary weapon. No one would be able to tell how formidable it was. Even Swordfather Triult, who had personally witnessed the power of Ning's blow, thought that it was due to some breakthrough which Ning had made. He didn't understand that it was Ning's sword which had undergone an utterly earthshaking transformation.

"So the difference between an Eternal weapon and a Dao weapon is actually this great!"

"Even when I don't activate its quintessence core, it's still significantly more powerful than any Dao weapon. Once I activate it...its power is utterly incalculable!" Ning mused to himself.

Eternal weapons were precious because of their quintessence cores. This was the reason why figures like Daolord Badlands or Daolord Windsourcel relied upon them in battle. The power of their cores was utterly inconceivable. However, Ning was far from being able to master an Eternal weapon for now. All he was able to do at present was guide out just a strand of its power, but that strand was already enough to cause his power to skyrocket.

Ning began to release the prisoners, one after the other.

Ning had long ago swept through and dominated all the prisoners in the prisonworld. Prior to the Endwar, Ning had used every technique he had at his disposal to either force them to submit or perish.

Now...Ning helped them sever their shackles.

Whoosh.

A group of figures appeared out of nowhere on a grassy plains.

These were all the Immortals and Fiendgods who had been imprisoned within the prisonworld. Ning had stored them away into his own estate-world. Just moments ago, all of them had been chatting excitedly amongst

themselves.

“The Overseer is absolutely incredible. I personally saw him appear almost instantly, moving far more quickly than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. He just casually chopped out with his sword and chopped through the chains like mud. Crunch! The chains were completely severed. It wasn’t even hard! He definitely is as powerful as only a World God or Chaos Immortal should be!”

“But he obviously is an Elder God.”

“Right, the Overseer definitely is an Elder God. When I first saw him, he was actually just an Empyrean God. I even battled against him a few times. How could he possibly have become a World God in such a short period of time?”

“But for an Elder God to have the power of a World God...”

“He’s one of those legendary figures.”

All of them were extremely excited. Legendary monsters like Ning were incredibly rare. The vast territories each held dozens of World-level experts or more, but monsters like Ning were much rarer.

Whoosh.

Just as they were chatting excitedly, all of them were suddenly teleported to this grassy plains.

All of them fell silent.

Before them stood a white-robed figure who they all recognized as the Overseer. In the past, they might not have been convinced of his mastery, but now...all of them felt truly subdued. Some of them even felt veneration towards him!

“Everyone.” The white-robed Ning spoke out.

“I once said that when I have the power to do so, I shall release all of you from this prisonworld.”

“Now...”

“All of you are permitted to leave.”

“However, before you do so, I must give you a warning. The territory I am currently in is located within the primordial chaos and is known as the ‘Badlands Territory’. The Badlands Territory is an extremely large territory that holds more than eighty thousand chaosworlds, and multiple organizations hold World Gods and Chaos Immortals within their ranks. The most powerful organization is known as the Badlands Court, which rules over the Badlands Everworld. The Badlands Court was established by Daolord Badlands, someone who stands above World-level experts and has far more power than you can even imagine.”

“Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals can adventure through the Badlands Territory.”

“It is best for True Gods, True Immortals, Empyrean Gods, and Celestial Immortals to avoid travelling whenever possible, because if you run into some nasty individuals you might well end up as slaves,” Ning said. “I’m not trying to frighten you. I’m just telling you the truth. To be honest, I don’t need to frighten you.”

The Immortals and Fiendgods were all astonished.

The Badlands Territory?

Where the hell was this? Was this...was this place really that much more powerful than their chaos-kingdom of Pangaea?

“I wasn’t able to find any records of Pangaea in the Badlands Territory,” Ning said. “Alright. You can make your own decisions now. If you choose freedom, you have to swear a lifeblood oath not to tell anyone anything about me.”

“We are willing to forever serve you, Master.”

The sixteen Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had all spoke out in unison after exchanging glances with each other.

When they had been defeated by Ning, they had all already sworn lifeblood oaths to be his retainers.



“We are willing to serve you, Master.” The True Gods, True Immortals, Empyrean Gods, and Celestial Immortals all called out in unison after a brief hesitation.

Even the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were willing to call the Overseer ‘master’. What had they to be worried about?

In addition, the Overseer himself had suggested that the True Gods, True Immortals, Empyrean Gods, and Celestial Immortals should avoid doing too much travel, as they might be enslaved by unscrupulous figures. Although Ning had insisted that he wasn’t trying to scare them, they couldn’t help but feel uneasy. They had been imprisoned here for too long, and they didn’t have much hope of breaking through. All they wanted was to stay alive and enjoy life.

“Alright.” Ning nodded. “I am currently living in the Windsource Chaosworld. You may come with me.”

“Yes,” the assorted retainers all spoke out in unison.

Ning glanced at them and nodded slightly. In truth, he didn’t hold these True Gods, True Immortals, Empyrean Gods, and Celestial Immortals in much regard. However...some of them knew that he had multiple bodies! Long ago, Ning had been forced to use both his true body and his backup clones to fight them. This was why they had to swear lifeblood oaths if they left his service.

To be honest, even Ning himself felt that most of them would probably end up as slaves if they left. They were strangers in a strange land with no backers or protectors, after all.

The Windsource Chaosworld was quite a large place.

After returning to this chaosworld, he was able to use his status as Sentinel to carve out an area of a million kilometers in the Eastcalm Mountains for his retainers to live in. As for the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, they released the people and creatures that had been living within their estate-worlds, allowing them to live and propagate in this place.

“You may build your dwellings atop this mountain,” Ning instructed.

This was the mountain where the Sunrise Courtyard was located.

The sixteen Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, along with Flamefairy Su Youji, all took up residence in this area around Ning.

After this...life was extremely calm.

Su Youji often wished to spar against Ning. Each time, Ning would use his sword-arts to subdue her, causing her constantly come up with new ideas on how she could grow more powerful. Her improvements were quite noticeable.

As for Ji Ning?

Ji Ning improved even faster than she did. Thanks to the influence of Violetjewel’s quintessence core, the murderous intent of Ning’s sword-arts grew heavier and heavier, and his mastery of the ‘Killsword stance’ improved much more quickly as well.

As for the other sixteen Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, they each asked to spar against Ning once or twice as well. However, they clearly didn’t have much to work with. All of them had trained for far, far too long. They had long ago given up any hope of becoming a World-level expert.

Life in the Windsource Chaosworld was very calm. Ning focused completely on his sword-arts and on understanding the quintessence core of his sword. More than two hundred years passed in the blink of an eye.

The peak of a mountain.

Ning was seated in the lotus position. The mountain wind rustled against his robes.

Violetjewel lay across Ning’s knees. He treated it almost as he would a lover, keeping it by his side at all times so that he could constantly sense and attune to the will of its quintessence core. This made Ning’s rate of improvement astonishingly fast. A few decades ago, he had fully mastered the second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, the ‘Killsword stance’.

However, Ning didn't feel the slightest bit of pride or smugness.

In the face of the overwhelming sword-intent contained within Violetjewel's quintessence core, Ning understood how puny a figure he truly was.

"How wonderful it would be if I could one day reach the same level of power as the quintessence core of Violetjewel." Ning stared at the distant skies, the sword-intent hidden within his body causing wisps of sword-light to flow naturally in the area around him.

# Chapter 34: The Starlord's Obsession

The second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art was the 'Killsword' stance. The third stance was the 'Great Firmament' stance, also known as the 'Sword World' stance.

Upon mastering one's own Sword World, one would step into the World-level!

Different sword-arts would result in the creation of completely different Sword Worlds. Some Sword Worlds would be insidiously cold, others would be bursting with heat, while still others would be seep through every pore in your body. The third stance of the [Nameless] sword-art was clearly quite profound, but this meant that mastering it would also be incredibly difficult. Not even Ji Ning knew how long it would take for him to master the third stance.

Whoosh. A streak of light flew towards him from afar.

"Eh?" Ning was seated in the lotus position at the top of his mountain. He quickly turned his head to look over.

The streak of light came to a stop in front of Ning. It was a thin, gray-robed man with tousled hair. His eyes were dark yellow and filled with cruel coldness, but when he looked at Ning his gaze was filled with veneration and respect. He said respectfully, "Master."

Ning nodded.

This thin gray-robed man was actually the wild dog Elder God in his human form. After Ning had subdued the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals of the prisonworld, the one who ended up worshipping him the most and being the most loyal was actually Elder God Wilddog! Elder Dog Wilddog, in order to prove his loyalty, had insisted on swearing a second lifeblood oath to Ning which was so stringent, even Ning was shaken by its terms.

Elder God Wilddog was born as an Elder God in the form of a canine. He was a very solitary, arrogant man, but once he truly accepted someone as

his master, he would be completely and utterly devoted to the man.

Given that even Ning had been shaken by Wilddog's oath, he often chose to have Wilddog carry out many tasks on his behalf.

"How did it go?" Ning asked.

"I looked into this matter carefully. During the past few centuries, the 'Mindlord' in the service of God Emperor Blacklotus has been hiding within the imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire. He hasn't done any adventuring at all, nor has he led any troops out to do battle." A look of resentment was in Elder God Wilddog's eyes. "This Mindlord must be afraid of you, Master..."

Ning frowned.

The reason he had joined the Fogstone Dominion was for the sake of killing the Mindlord.

However, both Ning himself as well as Wilddog had made numerous scouting trips, only to discover that the Mindlord had spent the past few centuries in the imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire. Or, to be precise – ever since Ning had slain Old Man Yuan, the Mindlord had returned to the imperial capital, never taking so much as a single step out of it.

"This Mindlord truly is a cautious man." Ning frowned.

In truth, the sword-strike which Ning had used to slay Old Man Yuan had completely terrified the Mindlord.

The Mindlord knew exactly how deep the enmity between the Three Realms and himself ran. So many major powers had died by his hands, many of whom were pioneers and who had assisted, guided, or taught Ji Ning. Houyi, for example, was Ji Ning's senior apprentice-brother. As long as Ji Ning had the chance, he would definitely come for revenge.

Given how powerful Ji Ning had been...it would be far too easy for him to slay the Mindlord. It must be understood that Ji Ning's final sword-strike had pierced straight through his body, which was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure!

“Master?” Elder God Wilddog hunched over. “The Mindlord often visits friends in the imperial capital, and also likes to enjoy life. Why don’t you buy some Elder God slaves and let me lead them into the imperial capital, then kill him? After assassinating him, I’ll immediately flee through teleportation.”

“Unacceptable.” Ning shook his head.

“Not even World-level experts can be watching over every inch of their capital at all times. If I can find the right moment to attack, I’ll be able to escape afterwards.” A look of savagery was in Wilddog’s eyes.

“We are talking about the imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire...” Ning shook his head. “There’s no rush. We have plenty of time. Let’s take it slow.”

If they were hasty, they might make mistakes.

Ning was confident that he was capable of slaying the Mindlord. The only thing he needed was a good opportunity.

So long as he didn’t rush, opportunities would come!

The planet of Fogstone.

A quiet, secluded estate-world. This estate-world was filled with sparkling stars that twinkled with streams of energy.

A handsome man dressed in an astral robe was seated in the lotus position by the side of a lake. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Glittering divine jewels flew out of his body. These divine jewels were made from crystallized divine power. Once Fiendgod Body Refiners became World Gods, their divine power would crystallize into divine crystals. This was a qualitative transformation.

The divine jewels twinkled, filled with mysterious auras of the Dao. Every single divine jewel was filled with a slightly different aura of the Dao, but they all came together into a perfect whole.

Whoooooosh. A large number of divine jewels flew out of his body, swirling around him in circles, then flying back inside of him. As the

divine jewels flew in and out of his body, dancing in the air, they glimmered with the light of the stars themselves.

“The stars...”

The handsome man murmured softly to himself as his mind was filled with certain memories that he would never forget.

“I really have to go back. I must. I can’t disobey.”

“Alright...but you have to come back, Starchild.”

“I definitely will.”

Who would’ve thought that with this farewell would become an eternal one?

He would never forget the sight of his beloved shedding tears as he left.

Whoosh. Suddenly, the chaos energy began to stir around him as a total of twelve divine crystals suddenly materialized around him.

Boom!

The handsome man’s divine body split apart, transforming into a total of 36,000 divine crystals that all swirled around each other. Their Daos were joined together into a perfect whole that gave off a natural aura of completeness.

“Reform.”

The 36,000 divine crystals once more gathered together and transformed back into the astral-robed man.

“Full mastery...”

“I’ve finally become a master-class World God.” The astral-robed man’s eyes were filled with excitement as he murmured to himself, “Yi...I’ve kept you waiting far too long.”

Whoosh.

The astral-robed man disappeared into thin air.

.....

A black-robed man was seated at the front of a palace, drinking some wine and watching as a troop of female dancers performed before him. There were musicians present as well, playing some melodies.

“Mm?” World God Blackmist frowned, then instructed, “All of you, leave.”

“Yes.” All of the dancers, attendants, and musicians all departed, leaving behind just World God Blackmist within the palace.

A single person walked into the palace, a man dressed in astral robes with long black hair. It was the Starlord of Fogstone.

“Starchild.” World God Blackmist smiled. He had watched as the Starlord grew up, and the Starlord truly was an incredible genius. He had grown and improved tremendously fast and had long ago surpassed Blackmist himself. Blackmist had known and protected him for so long that the Starlord viewed himself almost as Blackmist’s son.

“Second Uncle.” The Starlord seated himself next to him.

“Mm? What is it?” World God Blackmist could sense that something was off.

“I’ve already become a master-class World God,” the Starlord said.

“Master-class? You’ve gained full mastery?” World God Blackmist revealed a look of surprise and delight, but then his face stiffened. “You...”

“Right. I’ve been waiting and biding my time for far, far too long. When Father left the Badlands Territory and went out adventuring, he ended up never returning. Back then, the Fogstone Dominion was very weak. There was no way I could get revenge. All I could do was keep on training...and in the end, I broke through to become a World-level expert. However, that old bastard Owlsoar ended up joining God Emperor Blacklotus. Even if I commanded all of the forces of the Fogstone Dominion against them, the end result would just be that both of our sides would be heavily damaged. As for Owlsoar himself, if he focused on fleeing I might not have been able to capture him.”

“For the sake of the Fogstone lineage...”



“I’ve been enduring my hate and biding my time. Now that I’ve become a master-class World God, it is time to act,” the Starlord said.

“But...” World God Blackmist hesitated.

He knew of the enmity between the Starlord and Chaos Immortal Owlsoar, of course.

When the Starlord had been very weak, World God Blackmist had accompanied him as he had wandered the outside world.

During his wanderings, the Starlord had encountered a female Immortal.

Both had been quite weak, but they still ended up falling in love with each other. Back then, World God Blackmist had pretended to be nothing more than an old servant.

Some time after the two met, the Starlord’s father, who had himself been the Starlord of Fogstone at that time, had summoned him. Thus, he had to immediately go back to Fogstone. As for that female Immortal, she was bound by her duty to her clan and so had to remain behind within it.

And with this parting...their farewell became eternal.

After the Starlord had returned to Fogstone, his father had completed all of his arrangements and then left the planet, never to return.

Chaos Immortal Owlsoar had been refining a mighty sin-treasure. He butchered countless innocent cultivators in order to baptize his sin-treasure with their blood...and alas, the clan of the Starlord’s lover was one of the clans that had been wiped out. By the time the Starlord found out, it was far too late...

The Starlord had cried bitterly before the ruins of his lover’s clan.

He swore he would take revenge.

Ever since that day, the Starlord began to improve at a dramatic pace, reaching the World-level in an astonishingly brief period of time! After doing so, he continued to grow tremendously quickly, making repeated breakthroughs without pausing. And now...he had become a master-class World God! Even his sword-arts were now far more profound than World

God Blackmist's.

"I can no longer wait," the Starlord growled. "I truly cannot. I've already reached the level of full mastery. How much more stronger do I need to become? Am I supposed to wait until I become a Daolord? That's far too difficult. Even if I waited another hundred chaos cycles, I still might not be able to achieve it."

"Now that I've reached the level of full mastery, I'm as strong as I possibly can be for now."

"We will definitely win this attack! I'll take part myself. There is no way that Chaos Immortal Owlsoar will be able to escape." The Starlord's handsome face was twisted with rage and savagery.

World God Blackmist couldn't help but secretly sigh upon seeing this. In the past, the Starlord had always been quite relaxed and nonchalant about cultivation. It was all due to his obsession, his stubborn desire to take revenge that he had transformed into a cultivating fanatic and improved so rapidly. In fact, the only reason why he hadn't left for revenge a long time ago was because he was worried about protecting the Fogstone lineage. That was why he had waited for so long.

"Starchild, if you wish to go seek revenge, then I shall definitely help you," World God Blackmist said. "However...you should first go and convince the other World-level experts of the Fogstone Dominion. The more who stand with us, the better our chances are."

"Alright." The Starlord of Fogstone nodded.

# Chapter 35: The Order

It was often said that the Fogstone Dominion held a total of nine World-level experts. This, however, referred to the ones who permanently resided within this region.

The Fogstone Dominion held sway over ninety-six chaosworlds. Over the course of many years, it had given birth to quite a few World-level experts. Many of them, such as the Starlord's father, had ended up leaving the Badlands Territory and adventuring through other lands! In truth, there were many World-level experts who drifted through other territories. Even the Starlord himself had visited quite a few territories, despite being fairly young.

At present, there were nine World-level experts on the planet of Fogstone. The Starlord, World God Blackmist, and Immortal Skyrum were all members of the Fogstone lineage. As for the other six, they were treated something like distinguished guests and honored vassals.

"If the Starlord wishes it, then I agree to take part in this battle. I will do everything I can to support our side in our campaign against the Blacklotus Empire, but if the situation goes south, I'll still have to focus on keeping myself alive," a bald, golden-robed elder said in a slow voice.

"Let everything happen according to the plan. I agree as well."

"Right."

"Acceptable."

"Haha, I'm reminded of the days when I adventured through the outside world. I've been secluded here on the planet of Fogstone for far too long. It is time for a good fight!"

"Since the Starlord has paid such a hefty price, we naturally are willing to agree!"

In the end, the nine World-level experts all agreed to join the battle against the Blacklotus Empire.

The Starlord nodded.

“Second Uncle, I’ll have to trouble you to pay a visit to the Badlands Everworld and purchase the ‘Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formations’ and the ‘Minor Thousand Ancestral Immortals Formations’,” the Starlord said.

“Done.” World God Blackmist nodded.

“Everyone, when the time comes, just follow the plan. It’ll make everything easier for you,” the Starlord said. “I don’t insist on you killing too many foes; I just need you to help me tie them down.”

“Don’t worry, Starlord.”

“A minor task for people like us.”

“Given the price you’ve already paid, Starlord...I can’t see how the Blacklotus Empire can possibly win.”

These vassal World-level experts, including Chaos Immortal Abyssus, were all couldn’t help but secretly sigh in amazement at how ancient and deep-rooted a lineage the Fogstone lineage was. They were actually capable of purchasing a ‘Minor Thousand Elder God Formation’ for the Fogstone Army!

In truth, over the course of countless years, the Fogstone Dominion had actually come into possession of three such formations. In order to strengthen their hand even more, they were going to purchase three sets of those formations for Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. Immortal Abyssus, the most unfathomably powerful of the six vassals, was also loaning one of his own formation sets as well.

These formations allowed a thousand Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals to join together in battle. Roughly three hundred cubes of chaos nectar was needed for each. Most World-level experts wouldn’t be able to afford such a price. All their possessions combined wouldn’t necessarily be worth that much.

A so-called ‘Major Thousand Elder Gods Formation’ actually allowed a total of nine thousand to assemble together in battle. However, those formations were far too expensive; they were worth almost as much as an Eternal weapon! However, these formations were also ridiculously

powerful; once a World-level expert was trapped within this formation, he would definitely perish!

.....

The Windsource Chaosworld. The Eastcalm mountains.

Ning was seated in the lotus position within the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance, working on the Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand].

Although most of his time was spent on sword-arts, he still needed to alternate through other areas of cultivation as well. During the past few centuries in the Windsource Chaosworld, Ning had been able to use his insights into the [Fogstone Apocalypse] and the [Nine Elements Annihilation] to roughly sketch out how the Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand] would work.

“Master.” A voice suddenly called out from outside.

“Eh?”

Ning opened his eyes. He hadn’t blocked out sound from the outside world, and so he was able to hear what was happening outside the Heavengazer Tower.

Swoosh!

Ning appeared out of nowhere within a study. He waved his hand, causing the Heavengazer Tower which had been atop the table to disappear.

Creeeeak. He pulled the door open. Outside the study stood Elder God Wilddog.

“Master, orders have come from the planet of Fogstone.” Elder God Wilddog said hurriedly, “The three captains stationed here have all been summoned already.”

“Orders?” Ning was startled, then nodded. “Let’s go take a look.”

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“What? Everyone is to return to Fogstone?” The golden-robed Elder God

Mountain Eater called out in shock.

“There’s no longer a need for troops to be stationed here on the Windsourc Chaosworld?” The other two captains, Tearwell and Souflight, were completely shocked as well.

As for Ning, he looked at the messenger before him.

The messenger said respectfully to Ning, “General, captains, this order comes from the Starlord himself. You can see it for yourself.” As he spoke, he handed over a glowing golden scroll over to Ning.

Ning unfurled the scroll and gave it a thorough reading.

The words on the scroll had been etched with divine power, and their aura was indeed the aura of the Starlord’s.

“The three of you can take a look as well.” Ning handed the scroll over.

Elder God Mountain Eater, Immortal Souflight, and Elder God Tearwell accepted the scroll and looked through it, puzzled. None of them questioned the validity of the order, as there was no way the scroll or the messenger could be faked. Anyone capable of making a scroll that could fool them was powerful enough to not need to do such a thing!

“This is an important border region, but he’s actually withdrawing all troops? This has never happened before in all the years I’ve been here,” Elder God Mountain Eater said in a low voice.

“Very well.” Ning nodded then instructed, “Since the Starlord has ordered it, all of us should immediately return to Fogstone. Also...the decree states that we have to withdraw in a stealthy fashion.”

“Right.” The three captains all nodded.

Ning left Swordfather Triult in the Eastcalm mountains, so as to protect the Immortals and Fiendgods who lived in the surrounding area. All the others, such as Flamefairy Su Youji or Elder God Wilddog, followed Ning in leaving this place.

They moved in stealth. Ning led his retainers as well as the hundreds of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals of the Fogstone Army away from the

Windsor Chaosworld and travelled to the planet of Fogstone.

Upon reaching Fogstone...Ning realized that thousands of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had all gathered here.

“It’s been a long time since I’ve seen so many Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.”

“This many?”

The soldiers all sighed in amazement, then began to break up into groups of four or five.

“General, the Starlord has summoned you.” Things wouldn’t be as relaxed for Ning as they were for the ordinary soldiers. He was immediately summoned into the Starlord’s estate.

The Starlord’s estate.

Four figures were seated within a side chamber.

“Eh?” Upon entering the side chamber, Ning immediately saw those four seated figures. All of them had extraordinary auras and different appearances.

“Greetings, generals.” Ning was the first to speak out.

“I heard that our Fogstone Army has gained a new general who sparred against World God Blackmist. A pity that by the time I heard of this, fellow Daoist Sunrise, you had already left Fogstone.” A tall, muscular, scaled alien cultivator dressed in white robes was the first to respond.

“Greetings, Sword Immortal Sunrise.”

“Brother Sunrise, we should spar as well if we have some free time.”

The four generals all behaved in a fairly friendly manner towards Ning. They were on the same side, after all, and they had all sworn lifeblood oaths to support each other. Naturally, they would be quite a cohesive force.

Soon, the sixth general arrived as well as Elder God Imperius.

“The Starlord has arrived.” The seven turned to stare towards the

outside, sensing the vast astral aura approaching. Moments later, an astral-robed man stepped into the hall.

“Greetings, Starlord.” The six generals and Elder God Imperius all bowed respectfully.

The Starlord sat down in the principal seat. “You can be seated as well.”

“Thank you, Starlord.” Ning and the others all sat down.

“I’ve summoned all of our Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals to Fogstone. I imagine you have your own guesses as to why.” The Starlord had a smile on his face.

Ning and the others were all quite curious. Given that the Starlord had summoned all of their many scattered armies...there definitely had to be an important reason behind this.

“The entire Fogstone Army is going to mobilize. Every World-level expert and every soldier is going to move out...and assault the Blacklotus Empire,” the Starlord said.

“What?!”

Everyone was shocked.

Ning was shocked as well. Although he was awaiting a good chance to act against the Mindlord, he was still stunned upon hearing this news. Generally speaking, the various organizations within the Badlands Territory would only engage in small-scale skirmishes against each other. These skirmishes were only meant to temper the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals within their ranks. Things would rarely escalate to the point of a full-blown war! Wars on that level...they had a tremendous impact on the area and would result in horrifying casualties.

Although the Fogstone Dominion had nine World-level experts, the Blacklotus Empire had six! In addition, a battle between cultivators wouldn’t be solely dependent on mere numbers alone. A single powerful World-level expert could very possibly counter seven or eight weaker World-level experts. An extremely powerful one, such as World God Northrest when he wielded Violetjewel, could easily slay ten ordinary



World Gods who stood in his path!

Thus, numbers didn't mean everything. No one could say for certain what the various World-level experts hid up their sleeves.

"Our plan has already been drawn up," the Starlord said. "The seven of you will each take control over 999 Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals! You'll form a total of six 'Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation' and one 'Minor Thousand Ancestral Immortals Formation'.

"Seven formations?" Ning was secretly shocked by this.

A formation that allowed a thousand Elder Gods to join their power would be able to surround and kill some of the weaker World-level experts! Even powerful ones would be stymied for a time by them!

"Imperius will be responsible for the Ancestral Immortals, while the six of you will be responsible for the Elder Gods. I'll give you all a month to familiarize yourselves with these formations," the Starlord said. "A month from now, we shall head out towards the Blacklotus Empire."

"Acknowledged." The six generals and Elder God Imperius all assented in unison.

# Chapter 36: Sparring With the Sword Again

Ji Ning and the other generals each accepted a set of formations, then left. Because Ning didn't have his own estate on the planet of Fogstone, the Starlord of Fogstone arranged special accommodations for him.

The estate Ning was given was roughly a hundred kilometers in size. It was once filled with gardens and pools, but all of those things had been flattened as a military drill grounds had been established here.

"General." A throng of Elder Gods were standing on the drill ground, watching Ning.

"Nine captains!" Ning called out.

"Present!" Instantly, nine goldenscale Elder Gods responded to Ning's call.

"Each of you shall command a total of 110 Elder Gods. Spend some time getting familiarized with this formation and getting better control over it." Ning waved his hand, causing nine dark-golden discs to fly out towards those nine captains. The entire Fogstone Army had undergone a significant revamping, with some of the personal servants of the World-level experts having been sent to join as well to make sure that each team had enough men!

The nine captains accepted the dark-golden discs, quickly binding them and attuning themselves to the mysteries within them.

"As for the rest of you..." Ning looked at the other Elder Gods, then waved his hand again, causing a large number of slightly smaller formation-discs to appear in the air. The divine runes covering these formation-discs were slightly less complicated as well. "You need to work hard as well. Cooperate with your captains. Your formation-discs will be a bit simpler; I trust that in four or five days, you should have mastered them."

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. The nine hundred-plus discs all flew

towards the Elder Gods, with each Elder God receiving one.

“As for me?” Ning explained, “I’ll be at the core of the formation, leading the nine captains.”

“I imagine you have already have an inkling as to what this is. Correct... this is a ‘Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation’!” Ning could see the curious looks on the faces of the Elder Gods. Most of them were probably secretly exchanging mental whispers, and so Ning just went straight to the point.

All of the Elder Gods present fell silent upon hearing this.

A Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation?

A formation which would allow a thousand Elder Gods to perfectly join their strength together and unleash it? Supposedly, even weak World Gods who were trapped within such a formation would be slain by it. They were actually going to have a chance to use such a legendarily powerful formation?

Hundred Elder Gods Formation. Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation. Major Thousand Elder Gods Formation.

These formations weren’t developed by any single power or any single Daolord. They had been developed and refined by many generations of major powers over the course of countless years. By now, they had reached the point of utmost perfection! It could be said that there was no way to improve these formations any further at all. They had become perfectly standardized and refined, and so all ‘Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formations’ were identical to each other, capable of allowing a thousand Elder Gods to unleash the full might of their combined power.

“From this day forth.” Ning swept the Elder Gods with his gaze. “You will have just one assignment. You are to master this formation as quickly as possible! You can practice with your captains and comrades in small groups. Every three days, all of us will come together for a joint practice session.”

“Alright. Go and meditate on the formation,” Ning commanded.

“Yes, General.” The Elder God soldiers all responded in unison.

Ning’s own formation-disc was the most complicated disc of all. He would be at the center of the formation and responsible for harmonizing it, and so Ning actually entered the Heavengazer Tower to meditate on it in detail. After spending six days inside the Heavengazer Tower, Ning completely mastered the formation.

Three days passed in the outside world.

The planet of Fogstone. The drill grounds at the front of Ning’s estate.

“Assemble the formation!” Ning issued the order.

Rumble...

Instantly, the thousand formation-discs joined together, causing countless streams of light to spring up and form a web that covered every single Elder God. The entire region seemed to be completely encompassed by this net of light.

“What a strange feeling.” Ning stood there, head raised towards the skies. “I feel as though I’ve become one with the heavens and the earth of this area.”

Once the formation was established, the users would become one with this dimension, forming a world unto themselves. This was the reason why they were able to fight evenly against even World-level experts.

“Eh?” Ning glanced sideways towards a fairly muscular Elder God captain. The formation in his region was trembling slightly.

“I’m still not that accustomed to this formation.” The captain sent a rather ashamed mental message.

Ning sent back, “Get accustomed, fast.”

“Yes.” The muscular captain himself realized that the eight other captains were in complete control of their parts; he was the only one who was falling behind. As for the ordinary Elder God soldiers, quite a few of them were rather unstable as well. However, because those soldiers served ancillary roles, their instability wouldn’t make much of a difference. They

were like the twigs, while the nine captains were like the branches! As for Ning, he was the trunk of the tree!

If anything happened to Ning, the entire formation would collapse.

“A world unto ourselves...once we strike, we’ll strike with not just the power of all the Elder Gods, but also with the power of the world itself.” Ning nodded to himself. An enemy attack on any single Elder God would be dispersed across the entire formation, as well as the world which the formation had created. Most likely, 99% of the power would be dispersed into the world.

Only a tiny amount of power would actually land upon the thousand Elder Gods!

Thus, most World-level experts would be unable to do anything to a thousand Elder Gods who had joined together in such a formation. Weaker ones would actually be killed.

“Alright. Most of our Elder Gods have already mastered the technique. Go back and spend some more time on it. I hope that three days from now, our formation will be even more perfect,” Ning said.

“Yes, General.” The Elder God soldiers were all rather excited.

This was their first time being part of such a tremendously mighty force. Even though they were merely the twigs of this mighty formation, they were still supposed by the world which this formation created, allowing each of them to reach the World God threshold of power. As for the nine captains, they would be even more powerful. As the center of the formation, Ning was the most powerful of them all! He was now far more powerful than when he was by himself and using the azureflower mist energy.

Whoooooosh. The Elder God soldiers quickly departed and the drill grounds fell silent.

“Eh?” Just as Ning turned to leave, he suddenly saw a figure appear.

A black-robed man with tousled hair had appeared on the drill grounds. He had a smile on his face as he strolled towards Ning in a leisurely

fashion.

Ning was surprised. World God Blackmist? Why had he come to this place?

“Greetings, senior.” Ning immediately called out respectfully to him.

“I could sense you assembling the formation so I took a look. Your forces have been pretty fast. The formation is more or less ready, and your control over it is excellent.” World God Blackmist chuckled. “The core formation-disc is the most complicated disc. To be able to master it within three days is impressive.”

Ning hurriedly said, “I actually spent a total of six days. I relied on the assistance of a temporal treasure to speed time up for myself.”

“Oh...”

World God Blackmist couldn't help but let out a surprised laugh. This Darknorth really was quite an honest fellow.

“The Starlord gave you a month, primarily because the core-disc is extremely hard to master. Six days is still impressive.” World God Blackmist continued, “Last time, when you sparred against me, I could see that that your sword-arts were on the verge of making a great breakthrough. Have you succeeded?”

“I did indeed make a breakthrough,” Ning said.

“Oh?” World God Blackmist's eyes lit up. He couldn't help it; of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals on Fogstone, the only one who was truly an expert in the Dao of the Sword was Ji Ning.

“Come on, then. Let's spar a bit!” World God Blackmist said.

“Yes.” Ning was growing excited as well.

Whoosh. Ning produced a longsword that seemed to flow with the waters of autumn. It was the flexible Dao sword he had acquired. Since they were merely sparring and testing out each other's sword-arts, there was no need to take out an Eternal weapon.

“Be careful.” World God Blackmist waved his hand, causing an ordinary-

looking longsword to appear. He naturally wouldn't use his most powerful weapon in a sparring match against a junior.

A smile on his face, World God Blackmist struck out with the sword in his hand.

When the sword-light flashed, it instantly seemed to fill the heavens and the earth with its light. The surrounding area seemed to have been transformed into an endless haze of black mist...and suddenly, a bizarre but dominating streak of sword-light stabbed out from within the mist.

Ning remained quite calm. He knew that this was the 'Sword World' of World God Blackmist.

"Break!" Ning struck out with an exceedingly savage stab as well.

When his sword shot out, it was like a stream of light.

This was the fastest and most penetrative stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art, the 'Blood Drop stance'. By now, this stance had been completely infused with the essence of the 'Killsword stance' of the [Nameless] sword-art. The [Nameless] sword-art actually represented a certain realm of comprehension regarding the sword. After absorbing the essence of its techniques, Ning had completely incorporated them into [Brightmoon].

When the Killsword stance struck, it held nothing back at all! Once the sword struck out, it carried an aura of grim resolve with it.

Boom!

Ning's sword-light clashed against Blackmist's strange sword-light, smashing it apart.

"Eh? This sword-art is quite clever. Last time, your sword-arts focused around complete control and perfect flawlessness. This time, it's the opposite...you ignore all else in favor of an attack that holds nothing back at all, filling it with savage resolve. In savagery alone, you are quite close to the average 'Sword World' level." World God Blackmist's voice rang out. "Fortunately, I'm not new to the Sword World level."

The power of Ning's sword-art was quite tremendous.

The essence of the Killsword stance was to be vicious to the enemy and merciless to the self. It ignored all defense and held nothing back, sending forth a strike of utterly incomparable might that was close in power to that of an ordinary Sword World's might.

Only someone who had already mastered the Heartsword stance would be able to use this technique without injuring himself. If someone who didn't master the Heartsword stance was to train in this technique, they wouldn't have the flawless control necessary to ensure that there would be no openings. The end result would be that if you were unable to kill your opponent, your opponent would be able to seize upon your flaws and kill you instead!

Only when the Heartsword stance was mastered could one use such a dangerous, ruinous stance.

The longer Blackmist fought, the more excited he became. This Darknorth truly was talented in sword-arts. He had improved so dramatically since their last fight! Aside from the savage and violent 'Killsword stance', Ning actually had another sword-art that was even more shocking to Blackmist. This was something Ning had come up with based on Violetjewel's quintessence core. Although it hadn't truly taken shape, it was still enough to make Blackmist's heart clench.

"Enough, enough." World God Blackmist laughed. "I'm using a Chaos weapon and the strength of an Elder God, but I'm at the verge of being beaten."

"I'm using a Dao weapon," Ning hurriedly explained.

"Oh, so that's how it is." World God Blackmist once more let out a surprised laugh as he glanced at Ning's flexible sword. "That explains it. My sword-arts are clearly more profound than yours, and yet I wasn't able to suppress you when I used a Chaos weapon and the strength of an Elder God."

Ning felt tremendous gratitude in his heart.



They had sparred for quite a long period of time just now. Only when Ning was unable to gain anything further had Blackmist brought things to a halt. This sparring match allowed Ning to test and verify all the many insights he had gained during the past few centuries, which translated into thousands of years in the Heavengazer Tower. His sword-arts had improved by quite a bit.

“It’s rare for Fogstone to produce such an expert in the Dao of the Sword.” World God Blackmist looked at Ning. “I can sense that your talent in the sword is no lower than the Starlord’s was. Train hard. Oh, right. Be careful on this trip to the Blacklotus Empire. Staying alive is what matters the most.”

“Alright.” Ning nodded.

“Also...this is a sword-art I personally devised. It has a simple name: [Blackmist] sword-art. You are already so talented with the sword that this sword-art of mine won’t be of much use to you, but if you read through it you might gain a few ideas.” World God Blackmist waved his hand, producing a jade slip which he tossed to Ning.

Ning immediately caught it, then said gratefully, “Thank you, senior.”

“To be honest, I was thinking about taking you on as my disciple. However, judging by your performance today, I can tell that you’ll soon catch up to me and perhaps even surpass me.” Blackmist smiled. “Alright. Continue with your preparations for the war.”

“Right,” Ning said.

World God Blackmist departed in as leisurely a fashion as he had arrived. His hair still tousled and mussled, he casually sauntered off before slowly disappearing into thin air.

Ning felt tremendous gratitude towards the man. The very first time Ning had arrived on Fogstone and met with World God Blackmist, Blackmist had personally sparred with him and guided him as well.

Time continued to pass, and Ning spent his days analyzing World God Blackmist’s sword-arts. Soon, a full month had gone past. It was time for

the grand army to go on campaign!

# Chapter 37: Invasion

The Starlord's estate. An enormous empty region within the estate was filled with a teeming mass of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.

"I wonder what they are planning to do with such an enormous force."

"They have to be planning on attacking a different organization."

"Even if they plan to launch an attack, is there a need to go this far? The Fogstone Army usually has around three thousand Elder Gods, and they normally would use just three of those formations. But now, they've actually managed to summon a force of seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, including some who were servants or slaves of the various Chaos Immortals and World Gods."

"Let's just watch and see."

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were all discussing this amongst themselves.

Ji Ning, Elder God Imperius, and a few others who knew the truth felt a certain tightness in their chests. Yes...their leaders had spared no expense on this war.

They had originally numbered just three thousand, but after recalling all of their far-flung forces and adding in many servants and slaves, the Fogstone Army now numbered seven thousand! Ancestral Immortal Imperius was a good example of an irregular who had been pulled in. He was the disciple of Chaos Immortal Abyssus and was incredibly strong, which was why he had been assigned to command one of the seven armies.

"I wonder what sort of a feud exists between the Blacklotus Empire and the Fogstone Dominion. Why is the Starlord going all out in this fight?" Ning murmured these words to himself.

"Here they are." Ning's eyes suddenly lit up as he saw the nine figures walking towards them from afar.

The leader of the nine was the astral-robed Starlord of Fogstone. Next to

him were the other World-level major powers. The nine of them walked forwards together, causing all of the gathered Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals to fall silent.

“Everyone,” the Starlord said, “This campaign is an extremely important one. When the fight begins, all of you need to listen to the orders of your generals.”

“Yes,” all the soldiers acknowledged.

“Come in.” The Starlord waved his hand. Whoosh. Instantly, a ripple of power spread out. None of the Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals resisted, resulting in all of them disappearing into thin air.

“By my command, the planet of Fogstone is to be completely sealed. No one is to be allowed to enter or leave.” A sonorous voice suddenly spread out into the ears of every single cultivator on the planet. Even the normally public trading markets were quickly sealed away as the entire planet was put on lockdown.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh swoosh! Swoosh!

The nine World-level experts soared upwards, quickly appearing in the skies and staring down upon Fogstone.

“Come in.” The Starlord waved his hand, causing the enormous planet of Fogstone itself to disappear as well. The planet had long ago been refined into an enormous magic treasure. This was the core legacy of the entire Fogstone lineage. Now that the entire Fogstone Army was on campaign, the Starlord naturally wasn’t willing to leave the planet here undefended.

“The Starlord really is going out this time,” a green-robed elder said with a chuckle.

“This time, we’re going to have a chance to witness the Starlord’s true power.”

“If all of us go all-out, we might very well be able to wipe out the entire Blacklotus Empire, even though that isn’t our goal. The only thing I’m concerned about is the guardian formation protecting the imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire.”

“Starlord, that guardian formation truly is quite deadly.”

The other World-level experts all issued words of caution.

An enemy’s capital was bound to be an incredibly dangerous place to invade. Every generation of Starlords had worked hard to further reinforce Fogstone, rendering its formations increasingly deadly. Although the Blacklotus Empire wasn’t as old as Fogstone and mainly relied on God Emperor Blacklotus’ personal power, without a doubt the God Emperor and his vassals had set up many mighty formations around the imperial capital.

“Don’t worry. Just carry out our plan,” the Starlord said. “All you need to do is do what I told you to do. Don’t worry about anything else.”

“Alright.”

“Right.”

These World-level experts were just giving the Starlord a few words of caution. They weren’t ordinary pawns who could be sacrificed for the sake of a greater goal. Given their power, they were qualified to speak and treat with the Starlord as equals.

“Alright. We can’t waste any time.” The Starlord frowned. “The sudden disappearance of Fogstone will soon be noticed, but it’ll take a bit of time before the word gets to the imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire. We need to get there as soon as possible. Ideally, we’ll arrive before the Blacklotus Empire is prepared for us.”

After speaking, the Starlord waved his hand and caused a ship of stars to appear before him.

The nine World-level experts all boarded this ship, which then twinkled with starlight and disappeared.

The imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire was located within the Blacklotus Chaosworld. It was the central administrative city for the entire Blacklotus Empire.

The entire city was actually an enormous magic treasure which was

shaped like a nine-petal black lotus. The entire city stretched out ten million kilometers and was seated at the very tip of a mountain. The city's layout was actually quite similar to the layout of the Badlands Everworld's Waveshift City. This was a testament to how ambitious God Emperor Blacklotus was. He was an incredibly arrogant figure, which was why he had styled himself as the 'God Emperor'.

"I wonder what's been going on with the Fogstone Dominion lately. They actually summoned back all of their Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals from their various stations." A gray-robed, black-haired man was frowning in thought as he sat within a winehouse located in the imperial capital.

This gray-robed, black-haired man had lofty brows, and the look in his eyes made it so that not even the winehouse's attendants dared to go near him.

"Can it be that Fogstone is about to launch a grand campaign?" The gray-robed man muttered to himself, "It can't be for the sake of that Ji Ning fellow, right? He shouldn't have that sort of ability."

"Ji Ning."

"Goddamn Ji Ning." The gray-robed man's face grew uglier by the moment.

He was one of the Nine Divine Generals of God Emperor Blacklotus, the Mindlord.

His Primaltwin had possessed Old Man Yuan in the Three Realms and had lived there for many years. As he saw it, for someone like him to wipe out a backwaters chaosworld was simplicity itself!

Although a World God in the form of Mother Nuwa had suddenly appeared out of nowhere, the Mindlord had remained hidden and didn't reveal his true power or intentions. Eventually, Mother Nuwa left.

He had remained hidden, even after her departure. He was in no rush, and his long life had taught him to be patient.

Finally, the Endwar had come.

First, that 'Lord of the Demonheart' had appeared once more! Although Demonheart had the power of a supreme Elder God, Old Man Yuan felt confident in being able to handle him.

And yet, those yokels had actually given rise to a formidable Heartforce Cultivator, Houyi! Still, this was not entirely unexpected. Old Man Yuan had taken control over Chang'e long ago, precisely because he wanted to have some leverage over Houyi. As a Heartforce Cultivator, he knew exactly how devastating such a mental influence could have on a cultivator.

He had accounted for everything...except for this Ji Ning.

Ji Ning. He had trained for a very brief period of time, but he was an utterly terrifying monster. In the end, Ji Ning had broken through and become so powerful that he had utterly crushed Old Man Yuan, defeating his palm-arts through superior sword-arts, then stabbing him through the forehead.

"Someone who has the power of a truly transcendent Elder God." Old Man Yuan had truly been terrified. He immediately planned a deception, and in the moment of his death he willed all of his servants and slaves to die. He even released his bindings over his various magic treasures, so as to put on a show of being truly dead. All of this was for the sake of preventing Ji Ning from finding him later.

However, when the Mindlord carefully analyzed this matter, he realized that he had made an miscalculation.

"Witherspike!" The gray-robed elder muttered to himself, "I didn't give a damn about Witherspike, but he knew exactly who I was. It is very possible that he might've told Ji Ning and the others about me. If he did that...given how much those of the Three Realms hate me, they'll definitely come for revenge. Given how strong Ji Ning is, he stands a very good chance of surviving the trip through that spatial vortex tunnel!"

"If he wants revenge...he'd probably want to find a backer. It's entirely possible that he might've joined one of the nearby organizations."

The Mindlord had instantly come to this conclusion, and so he

immediately began to purchase intelligence reports to see if any transcendent Elder Gods had appeared in recent years! In the end, he finally found out that Fogstone had gained a new general by the name of 'Sunrise'.

"Sunrise?" The gray-robed elder smirked. "Transcendent Elder Gods don't just appear out of nowhere. If Ji Ning truly has left the Three Realms, he most likely is this 'Sunrise' figure."

Although he had already guessed at the truth, there was still nothing that he could do about it.

Sunrise was stationed on the Windsource World and had three hundred Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals under his command. What was the Mindlord supposed to do? Ask a World-level expert to intervene? He didn't have that sort of ability.

All he could do was hide!

"Ugh."

"I don't even know if this 'Sunrise' really is Ji Ning," the gray-robed elder muttered to himself. "I hope he isn't. I hope that Witherspike never told Ji Ning about me."

To tell the truth, the Mindlord had been miserable in recent years! However, he knew that he had to keep enduring it and bide his time. He had to at least verify whether or not Sunrise really was Ji Ning.

If Sunrise really was...

Going outside by himself would be suicide.

"OUTRAGEOUS!!!" Suddenly, a furious roar rang out, echoing throughout the entire chaosworld and causing it to tremble. All the cultivators within the imperial capital of Blacklotus were shocked by this.

"Come to my estate immediately!" An icy cold voice that was tinged with rage suddenly rang out in the Mindlord's mind.

"His Imperial Majesty?" The Mindlord was shocked.

Swoosh!



Ignoring everyone and everything else, the gray-robed figure immediately flew out of the innhouse's window and headed straight towards the God Emperor's estate.

# Chapter 38: Legacy Treasure, Fogstone Planet

The Blacklotus Chaosworld. A giant warship with an aura of awe-inspiring majesty was forcing its way straight through this world.

The warship was ten thousand kilometers long, and at its prow stood nine World-level experts. Behind them stood a dense cluster of seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.

“This chaosworld is the home of God Emperor Blacklotus.” The Starlord’s face was icy and solemn. “There’s no way for us to escape his notice after we enter his chaosworld. Still...there’s no need to keep it hidden. It’ll be too late for him.”

Whoosh.

The great warship disappeared in a teleportation. When it reappeared, it was over the clouds that were above an enormous city that was shaped like a black lotus with nine petals.

Rumble...

A ripple of power spread out from the Blacklotus imperial capital. The ripple of power spread out to cover the entire chaosworld, seeking to completely seal it off from the space around it, but it was too late.

“This is the imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire?”

“A city shaped like a nine-petal black lotus...it has to be it.” Only now did most of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals aboard the ship understand who their target was. It was actually the Blacklotus Empire! All of them felt both excited and nervous. If they were by themselves, they would never dare to cause trouble here...but now there were seven thousand of them as well as nine World-level powers!

This filled all of them with excitement and eagerness.

“Assemble the formations,” the Starlord commanded.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The seven generals, including Ji Ning and Imperius, immediately began to assemble their formations. In almost an instant, all seven thousand of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were in place.

“Not a single one moved to flee?” The Starlord sat at the very front of the prow, staring downwards at the vast city below them. The entire chaosworld was now sealed so tightly that not even an ant could escape from it.

“Perhaps they feel that they are strong enough to leave when they please, if they feel the need to do so later,” Chaos Immortal Abyssus said with a chuckle.

“Hmph.” The Starlord laughed coldly. “They won’t be able to.”

Whoosh.

The Starlord swept open his astral robes. Instantly, an enormous planet suddenly appeared in midair. It was the planet of Fogstone! Fogstone was kept to a size of merely ten million kilometers, roughly the same size as the nine-petal black lotus below it, but Fogstone was emanating ripples of utterly terrifying power. And then...

Whoooooosh.

It shot out countless specks of astral light.

The starlight spread out to cover trillions of kilometers, completely illuminating the city beneath it, the nearby mountains and lakes, and the distant seas themselves as well as many mortal cities. In fact...its light spread out to cover this entire chaosworld.

“Ah?!”

“W-what’s...”

The countless living beings within this chaosworld, mortals and beasts included, all stared in puzzlement at the starlight that had just appeared everywhere.

The starlight felt very comfortable to them.

“What’s going on?” A cultivator suddenly realized, to his shock, that it

was now impossible to engage in teleportation here.

“The ripples of spacetime have become completely locked.”

Within the black lotus city.

Inside the God Emperor’s estate.

Six figures were standing shoulder-to-shoulder, staring upwards at the skies. When they saw the enormous planet of Fogstone suddenly appear and radiate starlight in every direction, their faces all paled.

“Damn.” A chubby, ruddy-skinned alien with just one vertical eye let out a growl. “The Starlord of Fogstone has actually moved his headquarters, the planet of Fogstone, to this place. According to the stories, the planet of Fogstone is actually the legacy treasure of the entire Fogstone lineage. When it spreads out its astral light, it will completely suppress the local ripples of spacetime, causing every single region to be completely locked down. There’s no way for us to escape, even if we wished to do so.”

“They actually brought their entire planet with them?”

“There’s not much of a feud between us and Fogstone. We have the occasional border skirmish, but none of our World-level powers have ever feuded against theirs. Why would the Starlord be so crazed as to move his entire planet here for this attack?”

The six were all quite puzzled. God Emperor Blacklotus was puzzled as well!

The Fogstone Dominion was of an ancient lineage, and its legacy treasure was the planet of Fogstone itself. In addition, every single Starlord of Fogstone was a terrifying figure. Even if a person was once nothing more than an ordinary World-level power, upon assuming the mantle of ‘Starlord of Fogstone’ that person would transform into an utterly terrifying figure. This was all because of the legacy treasure known as the planet Fogstone.

Fogstone could be used to attack...and if one paid an incalculable price, one would be able to unleash utterly ruinous power from it. The planet itself was filled with countless dangers and traps, making it so that very

few organizations would dare to raid it or launch attacks within it.

When used as a defensive structure, World-level experts had virtually no chance of breaking through into Fogstone.

When used to trap foes, the astral light it radiated would make it so that even World-level experts would move much slower!

Every single Starlord of Fogstone had the power to command and control the planet of Fogstone. This naturally made them some of the most troublesome opponents a World-level expert could face!

“Starchild.” A cold voice rang out, echoing within the prow of the incoming warship. “I don’t believe my Blacklotus Empire has ever offended you...and yet, you’ve actually gone so far as to move your legacy treasure, the planet of Fogstone, to my territory.”

“Blacklotus.” The Starlord stared downwards from his position at the prow, then said in a calm voice, “It is true that no grudges exist between the two of us, and I have no desire to engage in a war against you.”

“No desire to engage in a war? Then why have you come in such force?” The voice of the God Emperor rang out once more, causing the very air above the imperial capital to tremble.

“I’ve come here today solely for the sake of Immortal Owlsoar,” the Starlord said calmly. “After killing Owlsoar, I’ll immediately lead my forces away and also offer valuable treasures to make up for the offense.”

Everyone fell silent.

“I’ll give you as much time as is needed for a single stick of incense to be burned. Afterwards, if you choose to continue to protect Owlsoar, I’ll have no choice but to press the attack.” As the Starlord spoke, he waved his hand. A stick of gray incense instantly appeared in the air then self-ignited, emitting a calming and fragrant aroma. This was a precious treasure which cultivators used, known as the ‘Three Zens Incense’. Once it was lit, the cultivator would become extremely calm and be able to much more easily sense the Dao. This was of great benefit. When Ning trained in the [Solitary World God], what he needed to break through to

the next level was to have his heart be completely calm.

“What’s this all about?”

“Owlsoar, the Starlord of Fogstone did all this just to kill you?”

“What sort of grudge exists between the two of you?”

The other five, including God Emperor Blacklotus, turned to stare at Chaos Immortal Owlsoar.

Immortal Owlsoar was a jade-eyed elder who had a divine blood tattoo on his forehead. His oily jade eyes inspired terror in all who saw him. He frowned and said in a low voice, “I don’t think there is any enmity between the two of us. Don’t be impatient. Let me ask him about this.”

“Starlord of Fogstone.” Immortal Owlsoar’s cold voice rang out towards the great warship in the skies. “I don’t know how I’ve offended you. Is it possible that there has been some sort of a misunderstanding?”

“Haha...misunderstanding?” The cold voice that rang down from above was filled with endless hatred. “Were you the one behind the great massacre that occurred within the Blackcold Chaosworld?”

Immortal Owlsoar’s face immediately changed upon hearing this.

For the sake of forging a mighty sin-treasure, he had once butchered countless living creatures. However, although he had slain many individuals, he had been careful not to slay any creatures who were protected by other World-level experts. However, he knew that this sort of butchery would naturally stir revulsion amongst certain noble-minded figures and possibly result in them attacking him, which is why he had immediately joined God Emperor Blacklotus after finishing the refining process.

“Was there a connection between the creatures of that chaosworld and you?” Immortal Owlsoar still couldn’t believe it. By his calculations, when he wiped out the Blackcold Chaosworld the Starlord of Fogstone, Starchild, had been nothing more than a young fellow. Back then, the Starlord had actually been Starchild’s father.

“Haha...” A frenzied, frozen laughter was torn from the Starlord’s throat. “My Dao-companion was located on the Blackcold Chaosworld!”

“What?!” Immortal Owlsoar’s face completely changed.

Back then, Starchild truly had been nothing more than a young fellow, and his Dao-companion was nothing more than a weak female Immortal.

All those years ago, in the face of the power of a Chaos Immortal like Owlsoar, they were nothing more than dust in the wind. But now...the weak little Starchild had come for revenge in his capacity as the Starlord of Fogstone.

“Blacklotus.” Immortal Owlsoar hurriedly turned his head to look at the frowning God Emperor Blacklotus. He said frantically, “Blacklotus, we aren’t that much weaker than them. There’s no need for us to be afraid of Starchild.”

“Hmph.” God Emperor Blacklotus glanced sideways at him and let out a cold snort. Clearly, he was quite unhappy at the trouble which Immortal Owlsoar had brought to his doorstep.

God Emperor Blacklotus had quite an unpleasant look on his face, and he felt quite unhappy that the Starlord of Fogstone had come to his very doorsteps.

.....

At this very moment. The spacetime transfer array of Sevenwater Star.

A barefoot old man dressed in ragged clothes suddenly appeared within the array.

The Immortals and Fiendgods responsible for protecting the array stared at the old man in astonishment. “H-he...actually paid the fee to have the array be activated for him ahead of schedule?”

This would cost a hundred bottles of chaos nectar for short distances and even more for longer distances. Thus, not even World Gods or Chaos Immortals would do so lightly. Generally speaking, only the most top-tier of World-level experts would ever choose to have the spacetime transfer

arrays activated for them on an individual basis. They often travelled throughout the outside world, after all, and constantly went from one array to another. If they had to pay for a personal activation each time, the costs would be quite staggering. Thus, it was quite rare for even the caretakers of the spacetime transfer arrays to see a cultivator have the array activated on an individual basis. This was especially true for a lesser-travelled location such as Sevenwater Star.

As for this old man's strange appearance, that didn't really matter. Cultivators dressed and acted as they pleased. They could all tell that this barefoot old man had an extraordinary demeanor. None of the caretakers even dared to breathe loudly in front of him.

"Ugh. Finally made it to the Sevenwater Star of the Badlands Territory." The raggedy old man stepped out of the formation and into the skies. He muttered to himself, "If Daolord Windsourc was going to die, he could've just died somewhere convenient. Why the hell did he have to run all the way over here, to the Badlands Territory? This old man is dog-tired from the journey."



# Chapter 39: The Battle Begins

“The Windsource Ruins. Mm. Thank goodness Daolord Windsource set up an estate just before he died. All of his treasures should probably be inside that place. I hope my information is correct and the talisman is truly inside there as well!”

The raggedy old man took another step through the void of space, then completely disappeared.

.....

The Blacklotus Chaosworld.

Above the city shaped like a black lotus with nine petals was an enormous planet that glimmered with boundless amounts of astral light.

The two forces faced each other watchfully.

Within the God Emperor’s estate.

“What do you think we should do, everyone?” God Emperor Blacklotus glanced at the other four World-level experts.

“Help me out, everyone.” Chaos Immortal Owlsoar looked at the other four as well, a hint of ill-disguised entreaty on his face. At a time like this, face no longer mattered. If God Emperor Blacklotus and the other five weren’t willing to stand up for him and he was forced to face the might of the entire Fogstone Army by himself, he would most assuredly perish.

“Owlsoar, you...ugh. Forget it. It is far too late now.” A man dressed in a white robe embroidered with flowers shook his head.

“What, are all of you shrinking back already? The Fogstone Dominion isn’t that much more powerful than us. If they force us to bow our heads this time, how will we ever be able to raise our heads again when meeting the other World-level powers of the Badlands Territory?” An alien covered in oily black armor spoke out, his golden eyes filled with anger.

“The entire reason we all joined together in an alliance was so that we could jointly deal with any threats, right? It’s also been a long time since

I've had a good fight. My hands itch." The chubby cyclopean alien spoke out in concurrence.

A look of delight and gratitude appeared on Immortal Owlsoar's face.

"I'll listen to what Blacklotus says," the bald, gray-robed elder said calmly.

"Blacklotus..." All of them turned to look at God Emperor Blacklotus. Immortal Owlsoar had a hopeful look on his face.

God Emperor Blacklotus gave Immortal Owlsoar a glance, secretly shaking his head. He had always felt rather contemptuous towards Immortal Owlsoar. Immortal Owlsoar had only been able to break into the World-level due to a stroke of tremendous luck, not talent. After breaking through to this level, it had become extremely difficult for him to improve any further at all. Thus, Immortal Owlsoar had chosen to embark upon an evil path...and yet, despite having chosen this path, Immortal Owlsoar was always worried about the consequences of his actions. As a result couldn't be considered a truly demonic figure.

Based on what God Emperor Blacklotus knew...

The truly demonic figures of the legends were able to throw an entire territory into utter turmoil despite merely being World-level figures! They would cause all the living creatures of tens of thousands of chaosworlds to perish for the sake of refining a single terrifying sin-treasure. Compared to those figures, Immortal Owlsoar was quite lacking.

"Everyone, I agree with what you said." God Emperor Blacklotus nodded. "Since we've chosen to stand together, we need to remain unified."

Immortal Owlsoar was delighted upon hearing this.

"In addition...although Starchild claims that he holds a huge grudge against Immortal Owlsoar, who knows if he's even telling the truth?" God Emperor Blacklotus laughed coldly. "He might have simply come up with a random excuse to force us to give up Owlsoar. After he kills Owlsoar, what's to stop him from coming up with another random excuse to kill another one of us? Are we supposed to give up our fellows one after the

other? By then, we'll be even weaker before. They'd probably be able to wipe us out at one blow."

"Right, right! This is probably a plot!" Immortal Owlsoar said hurriedly.

"Enough! Shut your damn mouth. I only said he 'might have'." God Emperor Blacklotus cast him a cold glance. "The more likely answer is that he really does hold a grudge against Owlsoar. To engage in such a large battle for just a bit of territory wouldn't really be worth it. It is very possible that his Dao-companion truly was killed by Owlsoar."

Immortal Owlsoar nervously bit his lips.

"Still...for him to force his way to our doorstep is a sign of completely disrespect towards me and towards all of you." God Emperor Blacklotus said calmly, "They have nine World-level experts while we only have six, but we also have the protective formations surrounding our imperial capital. How dare they act so brashly?"

"Agreed."

"They really are holding us in no regard whatsoever."

"They're actually kicking in our doors. Let's have a fight with them and see who is really stronger."

.....

Atop the warship in the air.

The Starlord of Fogstone and the rest of the nine World-level experts were waiting quietly. The stick of incense hovering in midair continued to slowly burn, with less than half of it remaining.

"Starchild." A voice rang out from below.

"Have you made your decision?" The Starlord of Fogstone replied coldly.

"You say you wish to kill Immortal Owlsoar, and so I must let you kill him? What if you then demand to kill my other World-level experts? Am I supposed to offer them up as well?" God Emperor Blacklotus' voice was icy cold as well. "In the end, I'll be all by myself...and then you'll just gang up on me and kill me, right?"

The Starlord frowned then sent back, “Blacklotus, if you don’t believe me, I’m willing to swear a lifeblood oath.”

“No need for a lifeblood oath. Even if Owlsoar truly did kill your Dao-companion, he is still a Chaos Immortal of my Blacklotus Empire! All of us have joined together in an alliance, precisely because we saw the value of joining together against powerful enemies.” God Emperor Blacklotus’ voice grew even colder. “If you leave right away, I’ll forget about your affront and your invasion of my territory. If you do not...then I have no choice but to let this be settled through combat.”

“A true pity.” The Starlord waved his hand, causing the half-burnt stick of incense to disappear.

“It seems we will still have to face them in combat.”

“We expected that.”

The others, including Immortal Skyram and Immortal Abyssus, all glanced at each other. All of them had suspected that Fogstone wasn’t powerful enough to force the Blacklotus Empire to surrender without firing a single shot. Thus, they were already prepared to storm this city by force. The reason why they had acted in such secrecy was to ensure that the Blacklotus Empire wouldn’t have the chance to purchase any Elder God Formations of their own.

“Seven formations, attack!” The Starlord commanded.

“Acknowledged!” Ning and the rest of the six called out in unison.

“Let’s go,” Ning ordered. He led his 999 Elder Gods to fly out of the great warship, and the other six armies flew out alongside them.

“Spread out,” Ning sent mentally.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh.

Everyone, Ning included, began to spread out to cover an area of ten million kilometers. Their bodies then blurred as they each transformed to become massive titans who were ten thousand kilometers tall. These titans each held weapons in their hands and were surrounded by veils of

flowing light. Clearly, they were reinforced by the world-energy of the 'Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation'.

A thousand titanic Elder Gods had appeared, staying within roughly ten thousand kilometers of each other.

Aside from Ning's army, the other six armies of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had also scattered within an area of ten million kilometers. The Elder Gods all transformed to become ten thousand kilometers tall, and the weapons in their hands grew alongside them. As for the Ancestral Immortals, they retreated slightly but began to take control over their magic treasures.

"ATTACK!" The Starlord of Fogstone pointed downwards towards the lotus-shaped city and gave the order.

"Attack!"

"Attack!"

The seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals howled furiously as they charged downwards. It was as though a giant hemisphere of light formed by thousands of towering Fiendgods had come smashing downwards towards the city...and right behind them were the nine World-level powers!

The World-level powers were worried about the formations guarding the imperial capital of Blacklotus. The formations protecting any organization's headquarters were bound to be extraordinarily powerful, and ordinary Chaos Immortals and World Gods might not be able to handle them.

However, the 'Minor Thousand Elder Gods formation' was expressly meant to block attacks and entangle foes. Thus, part of their plan was to have those seven formations join together and reinforce each other. This was the most dangerous part of the plan, and the nine World-level experts weren't willing to take the brunt of the danger.

A black cloud suddenly appeared around the black lotus city below them. The black cloud drifted outwards, covering the air above the city

and serving as a protective layer.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals simultaneously launched attacks downwards, with the Elder Gods lashing out with their enormous weapons. Ning, for example, was using the flexible Dao sword with his right hand and Violetjewel with his left. Both swords had been transformed to become many tens of thousands of kilometers long, and he hacked down furiously with both of them at the same time! But of course, Ning kept part of Violetjewel’s true power in abeyance, not letting it truly erupt.

Right now, all of their forces were attacking simultaneously. Even if Ning held nothing back at all, it wouldn’t make much of a difference. It was better to keep his true power hidden and unleash it later in a sudden, critical attack against the forces of the Blacklotus Empire.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals launched frenzied attacks at the black cloud, smashing down with their gigantic weapons or striking from afar with magic treasures.

Every single Elder God and Ancestral Immortal was supported by the power of the world which had been created by their formation!

Even the attacks of ordinary Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had reached the World God threshold of power! The nine captains of each formation were even more powerful, and as for the generals at the center? They were now comparable to true World-level experts. Although the ordinary Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had merely reached the World God ‘threshold’ of power, they had the advantage of overwhelming numbers.

None of the World-level experts of the Blacklotus Empire would dare to withstand the combined assault of seven thousand Elder Gods and

Ancestral Immortals in formations.

Whoosh.

The black cloud didn't seem to resist at all, allowing the enormous weapons and magic treasures to pass straight through it.

"It isn't blocking?" The nine World-level powers behind the seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all frowned.

If the Blacklotus Empire focused completely on defense and forcefully fought back against every attack, it would actually be fairly easy for them to take it down. In a head-on clash, the Blacklotus Empire's formation would have to withstand the full brunt of their blows, after all. But now that the Blacklotus Empire wasn't blocking and was instead enduring and ablating their attacks, things would become a bit more difficult.

"It seems the guardian formation of the imperial capital of Blacklotus is quite profound." The Starlord sent mentally, "Seven formations, enter the imperial capital and smash all before you."

"Yes."

The seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had joined together to form a half-globe of light that was ten million kilometers across. They pressed downwards forcefully, emanating a thick aura of World energy.

In truth, all World-level experts possessed World energy. Chaos Immortals dispersed their Jindan region into primordial chaos, then formed a chaosworld from it. As for World Gods, the mighty power within their body was equivalent to the power of an entire chaosworld, which was why they were also capable of forming chaosworlds.

As for Ning and his subordinates, they had World energy thanks to the 'Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation'.

A thousand Elder Gods who were able to perfectly mesh their energy together through a formation would be able to naturally merge with the dimension around them and be supported by the power of the local World energy.

Rumble...

The seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were incomparably valiant as they continued their downwards charge, brandishing countless weapons. They soon charged into the dark clouds that were covering the lotus-shaped city.

The black clouds were pushed aside by their World energy, and they continued to crash downwards.

“We have seven formations working together.” A hint of a killing intent could be seen in the Starlord’s eyes. “No matter how formidable your formations are, there’s no way you can break our seven mighty formations.”

A single ‘Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation’ was already extremely tough to break apart. Seven of them joining forces...

The Starlord believed that most likely only a Daolord would be capable of defeating such a force.

The seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were what he was relying on to deal with the formations protecting the imperial capital of Blacklotus!



# Chapter 40: Ji Ning and the Mindlord

“The restrictive spells covering the imperial capital are no longer a threat to us.” Immortal Abyssus smiled.

“Agreed.” The Starlord of Fogstone nodded. “Everyone, our seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals have already entered combat. It is time for us to join them. Blacklotus and the rest of the six are inside the city. There’s no way they can avoid my astral light. Let everything proceed as according to plan.”

“Excellent.”

“Let’s go.”

“Attack.”

Flickers of killing intent appeared in the eyes of the World Gods and Chaos Immortals.

“Ji Ning, your squad of Elder Gods is responsible for protecting Immortal Overguard.” The Starlord’s voice rang out by Ning’s ears.

Rumble...

An enormous number of icy blades were howling through the air towards him. The titanic Ning wielded two swords in his hands, using them to hack with abandon and knock the blades aside. All of the formations and restrictive spells protecting the imperial capital had been activated, resulting in a furious flurry of attacks being directed at the seven thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.

“Yes, Starlord.” Ning immediately acknowledged the order, then sent out an order of his own. “Captain Mountain Eater, lead your 110 Elder Gods to protect Immortal Overguard.”

Ning had a total of nine squads under his command. Elder God Mountain Eater’s squad was located closest to Immortal Overguard.

“Acknowledged.”

The hundred-plus Elder Gods under Mountain Eater’s command

immediately moved into a defensive perimeter around Chaos Immortal Overguard.

“Follow me.” Chaos Immortal Overguard stood atop an enormous formation-diagram which was covered with four different streams of colored light that emanated an aura of awesome power. As for Mountain Eater and his hundred, they were all scattered around him in a protective stance. Once any attacks from the defensive formation and spells appeared, they would immediately go forward to block them.

Although Ning’s army of a thousand Elder Gods were scattered across various corners of the castle, they remained joined together in one unit!

A grand formation like the ‘Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation’ could be maintained across great distances. Even if all of them were spread throughout an entire chaosworld, they would still be able to keep the formation active. But of course, if they continued to expand it too much beyond that, there would be no way for the formation to remain active.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh.

The nine World-level experts broke apart into six squads, each of which was protected by over a hundred Elder Gods. The six squads launched attacks against the six World-level experts of the Blacklotus Empire.

Finally, the World-level experts of both chaos empires were about to clash.

“Owlsoar.” The handsome, astral-robed Starlord stared coldly towards the distant jade-eyed elder. The old man’s eyes were closed as he took out a treasure that looked like a ritual tower. The ritual tower emanated the screams and calls of countless souls. Weaker individuals who heard the terrifying cries emanating from a sin-weapon like this could very well suffer a mental breakdown.

“The Starlord of Fogstone.” Immortal Owlsoar held the ritual tower in his hands, staring coldly at the Starlord and the black-robed, black-haired man next to him. “Two of you against me? You honor me too much.”

“Owlsoar.” World God Blackmist said calmly, “Today, you shall definitely die.”

“Oh, is that so?” Immortal Owlsoar let out a cold laugh, then waved his hands. Suddenly, a large group of figures appeared out of nowhere next to him. There were exactly a thousand Elder Gods, and they all emanated the same ripples of World-energy.

“A Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation?” The Starlord’s face changed.

He didn’t expect that Immortal Owlsoar would actually have a thousand Elder Gods with him, as well as a Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation of his own. This was going to be tricky. Everyone knew how defensively formidable these formations were. When he joined forces with World God Blackmist, he had thought that it would be easy for them to deal with Owlsoar. Similarly, if they were just dealing with a thousand Elder Gods in formation, it wouldn’t be too difficult. But to deal with both at the same time...this was going to be tough.

“Eh?” The Starlord frowned. His astral light was spread throughout the city, and thus he saw that a Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation had suddenly appeared next to God Emperor Blacklotus as well.

“They actually have two of their own?” The Starlord was surprised.

“Be careful, everyone. The Blacklotus Empire has two Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formations of their own. One is protecting God Emperor Blacklotus while the other is protecting Chaos Immortal Owlsoar,” the Starlord sent mentally.

“How can this be?”

“Why do they have two of their own?”

“Was our attack leaked by someone to them?”

“Impossible. If it was leaked, the Blacklotus Empire would’ve paid any price necessary to acquire more of these formations. They wouldn’t just have two.”

“If there was no leak...this means they are always carrying two thousand Elder Gods with them at all times?”

The World-level powers of the Fogstone Dominion conversed mentally amongst themselves, growing more vigilant and wary.

They all knew exactly what these two additional formations represented.

A single such formation required roughly three hundred cubes of chaos nectar! It must be understood that even after selling off so many treasures, Ning had only been able to acquire a bit over a hundred cubes. This was already roughly equivalent to the entire networth of most World-level experts. More powerful World-level experts might have perhaps five hundred cubes worth of treasures, but almost none of them would be willing to sell off three hundred cubes worth of treasures in order to purchase a single formation.

In the Fogstone Dominion, the only person who personally owned one of those formations was Chaos Immortal Abyssus, who had adventured in the primordial chaos for many years and was unfathomably powerful. None of the other eight owned any of these formations in their own right! The Fogstone Dominion itself had three of these formations, but those belonged to the Fogstone lineage, not the Starlord of Fogstone himself. This time, they had then paid an utterly enormous price, selling off quite a few of the Dominion's treasures in order to buy an additional three sets.

Seven total sets. Six belonged to the Fogstone lineage, one was on loan from Chaos Immortal Abyssus. From this, one could see how rare and valuable these formations were.

But the Blacklotus Empire?

God Emperor Blacklotus had personally established the entire empire; he had no lineage or backing. As for the other five World-level experts, they were just temporary vassals and none of them were particularly outstanding. Logically speaking, they shouldn't be wealthy enough to waste money on one of these formations, as none of them should've even had that many Elder God slaves.

So...where did these two formations come from?

“None of the other World-level experts have a thousand Elder God slaves with them.”

“Only God Emperor Blacklotus might have that many. Although he didn’t have that many slaves, he did have an army with thousands of Elder Gods. Those two formations probably came from him...but he built up the Blacklotus Empire all on his own with no outside backing. How could he possibly afford two of those formations all by himself?” This was why all nine of the World-level experts of Fogstone had grown wary.

God Emperor Blacklotus stood in place, an enormous black lotus with nine petals beneath his feet. The lotus flower swiveled slowly as its petals spread outwards.

Beyond the perimeter of the lotus flowers stood a thousand Elder Gods.

“Blacklotus, it seems all of us have underestimated you.” Immortal Abyssus, Immortal Skyrum, and World God Goldcloud stood there in midair, each surrounded by a hundred Elder Gods who were helping them block the enemy defensive spells.

The Fogstone Dominion had a total of nine World-level experts.

Three of them had been sent to deal with God Emperor Blacklotus!

Two were dealing with Immortal Owlsoar.

The others were all fighting in single combat. The goal wasn’t to win; it was just to tie their foes down.

“Since you’ve decided to come onto my territory...you shall never leave again.” God Emperor Blacklotus swept them with a calm gaze. “Attack.”

“Attack!” The thousand Elder Gods around him all howled furiously as they charged forwards.

Ning could sense the six titanic shockwaves emanating throughout the city. These were the shockwaves coming from the battles against the six World-level experts.

Fortunately, this place was the imperial capital of Blacklotus! And fortunately, the astral light of Fogstone was suppressing the ripples of

spacetime in this area.

Otherwise, a battle on this scale and level would've caused the entire chaosworld to break apart long ago.

"Things are much easier for us." Ning and the seven thousand Elder Gods only had to focus on dealing with the defensive enemy spells and formations.

Rumble...

A streak of violet-golden thunderfire struck directly towards Ning.

Ning struck out with his sword, immediately breaking apart the streak of thunderfire. 99% of the power of the attack was absorbed by the invisible dimension protecting them, while the remaining 1% was jointly handled by the thousand Elder Gods.

Whoosh. Ning charged straight forwards. As the center of the entire formation, he had to stay within the city. So long as he did so, the formation would be fine. The other Elder Gods were assigned to various regions, but he, as the core, wasn't given a specific assignment.

"The Starlord really is impressive."

As Ning moved from place to place, suppressing the power of the defensive spells and formations, he also kept an eye on the various World-level experts. After watching two of them, he turned to watch the battle going on with the Starlord.

The Starlord was an extremely dazzling figure. Countless streams of astral light spread out from around him as though he was their sovereign and emperor. All by himself, he was able to tie down both Immortal Owlsoar and the formation of a thousand Elder Gods. World God Blackmist was helping out as well, but the tower-wielding Immortal Owlsoar and his formation of Elder Gods was still able resist their attacks. These formations were meant for defense, after all.

"Eh?" Ning was suddenly stunned.

He had just seen a gray-robed, black-haired old man amongst those

thousand Elder Gods...and the man had seen Ning as well.

Sparks began to fly as their gazes met in midair.

“Old Man Yuan?” Ning had received a detailed intelligence report regarding the Mindlord long ago which included information about his appearance. He was able to recognize the man at a single glance...and the way in which that man looked at Ning made Ning feel completely certain that it was definitely Old Man Yuan!

“Ji Ning?” When the Mindlord saw that distant, blurry figure amongst the ranks of the Elder Gods of Fogstone, he was frightened quite badly.

# Chapter 41: The Death of Chaos Immortal Owlsoar

“H-he actually did leave the Three Realms.” The Mindlord’s heart was shaking, but he quickly came back to his senses. “Why should I fear him? I’m a member of a Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation. Not even World-level experts can do anything to me right now. Me, fear him, an Elder God? It’s actually good that he’s here. I’ll find a chance to kill him.”

“Him! It’s him!” Ji Ning had been quite calm, but upon seeing the Mindlord Ning’s eyes instantly turned bloodshot.

Those memories began to play through his mind...

The death of Human Sovereign Suiren, whose body had transformed into those petals of kindlefire...

The self-detonations of Daoist Three Purities, Lord Tathagata the Buddha, Keeper Everwood, and Buddha Jueming...

Senior apprentice-brother Houyi, who had died right in front of Chang’e...

And those countless other Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms who had sacrificed their lives in self-detonation...

Ning could hear the sounds of those detonations ringing within his memories. He could hear those furious roars, those frenzied screams.

Murderous rage began to swell in his heart, rage which he was unable to suppress. It quickly filled his entire being.

Countless comrades had died in the Endwar...all because of this man!

“Old Man Yuan! DIE!” Ning immediately charged straight towards the Mindlord.

“Eh?” When the Mindlord saw Ning transform into a streak of light and fly towards him, he let out a cold smirk. “He’s just an Elder God. How can he possibly shake our formation of a thousand Elder Gods?”



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“He’s too powerful.” Chaos Immortal Owlsoar had an ugly look on his face. He gritted his teeth, summoning the ritual tower closer towards himself. He was just barely able to set up a defensive perimeter of roughly thirty meters around himself. “How is the Starlord this powerful? Aren’t they only powerful because they can rely on the power of Fogstone itself? But the planet of Fogstone is outside the city! The Starlord is relying on just his sword-arts yet is still incredibly powerful!”

Thanks to this mighty sin-weapon, Chaos Immortal Owlsoar was a very formidable figure even amongst World-level experts, and the ritual tower was actually meant for defense.

And yet...even though he had a thousand Elder Gods helping him to divert his enemy’s attacks, he had still been beaten back to the point of only being able to keep a defensive perimeter of just thirty meters. If he didn’t have the thousand Elder Gods, he probably would’ve been slain in just one or two strokes.

“Second Uncle, this formation is a pain in the ass,” the Starlord sent frantically. He was using his seven formations to suppress the protective formations and defensive spells of the imperial capital, but now two such enemy formations were causing him problems as well.

“Yes, they are quite troublesome. I’m not able to breach their defenses either.” World God Blackmist had gone all out as well.

However, World God Blackmist was a bit weaker than the Starlord to begin with. He was roughly on par with Chaos Immortal Owlsoar.

“With this formation present, it’ll be very hard for us to kill Immortal Owlsoar.” The Starlord was growing frantic.

“This formation...” World God Blackmist was frantic as well. He had transformed to become a titanic figure who was thirty thousand kilometers tall, and he furiously launched attacks in every direction, but the thousand Elder Gods just absorbed his strikes as if they were made of soft taffy.

“Eh? Ji Ning?” The Starlord noticed Ji Ning suddenly charging towards them from afar.

Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning. The leaders of the Fogstone Dominion all knew who he truly was.

“Ji Ning, hurry up and go help World God Blackmist tie down the Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation!” The Starlord ordered.

“Yes, Starlord.” Ning immediately flew towards World God Blackmist.

“Ugh, what’s the point of him coming here?” The Starlord couldn’t help but secretly sigh to himself. “Even though he has the formation strengthening him, and even though he is the core of the formation, he will still be at most comparable to an ordinary World God. He’s probably a bit weaker than even my second uncle! Even if he does help out, it’ll be hard for them to completely tie down that enemy formation.”

Ning was wielding Violetjewel in his hands. His gaze was ice cold, and the azuremist energy had quickly begun to flow out from the azureflower seal on his forehead, permeating his entire body.

The reason why Ning had come to the Badlands Territory...was to kill the Mindlord!

And now, the Mindlord stood right before him!

Kill!

The power of the azureflower mist energy was strengthening him!

The World energy generated by the formation of Elder Gods was strengthening him!

He had an Eternal weapon...Violetjewel!

“KILLSWORD STANCE!”

Ning raised Violetjewel up high, assuming a stance reminiscent of Pangu cleaving Heaven from Earth. In this instant, Ning was using the ‘Heavenbreaker stance’ of the [Brightmoon] sword-art to unleash the essence ‘Killsword stance’.

All the stances of the [Nameless] sword-art, be it the Heartsword stance or the Killsword stance, represented a certain realm of enlightenment regarding the Dao of the Sword. Ning's own [Brightmoon] sword-art was completely capable of unleashing the full extent of his insights into these realms.

Whenever the Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation suffered an attack, it would first divert 99% of the energy of the attack into the World energy surrounding it, with the remaining 1% being spread across all thousand World Gods. This was why Ning had immediately used his most overpowering and dominating strike, the Heavenbreaker stance!

Rumble...

A strand of power was also extracted from the quintessence core within the Eternal sword and infused into the surface of the sword.

The enormous sword chopped straight towards Ning's most hated foe, the Mindlord.

"Ahahaha, it is useless! I'm now a member of an Elder God Formation. No matter how strong you are, you won't be able to do anything!" The Mindlord watched as that terrifying sword descended towards him. Although his heart shook a bit as he knew he wouldn't be able to survive it without the formation...the fact was that right now, he DID have the formation. What did he have to fear?

BOOM!!!

The blood-colored Violetjewel crashed down upon the Mindlord with absolute fury.

The concussive power of the blow was instantly dissipated into the surrounding region as well as across the bodies of all thousand Elder Gods. All of the Elder Gods trembled, their bodies coming to a brief halt.

"Eh?" World God Blackmist was both shocked and delighted by this.

To cause a thousand Elder Gods to come to a halt required an incredibly powerful attack. When World God Blackmist himself used his most powerful killer moves, this was the exact same result.

“What?!” The distant Starlord was also completely shocked and overjoyed by what he was seeing.

“Impossible. He’s just an Elder God. There’s no way he could’ve done this.” Immortal Owlsoar’s heart turned so cold that it was like a block of ice, and his eyes were filled with shock and rage.

“Ahahah...excellent, Darknorth, excellent! I didn’t expect that with the formation strengthening you, you would actually be as powerful as I am!” World God Blackmist sent mentally, “Join with me and attack these Elder Gods. Let’s make it impossible for them to help Immortal Owlsoar.”

“Acknowledged,” Ning said.

With the support of the azureflower mist energy and the formation, Ning was probably slightly more powerful than even World God Blackmist. He also had an Eternal weapon! And yet...Ning understood that his fatal weakness lay in his insights.

His sword-arts were still merely at the level of the Killsword stance, while World God Blackmist’s sword-arts were at a far higher level. This was why the two of them remained on par with each other in strength. In addition to that, Ning was still unable to unleash his Eternal weapon’s true power.

Eternal weapons were valuable because they had quintessence cores. It was the power that lay within their cores which was truly terrifying! If Ning was able to unleash just thirty or forty percent of that power, he would probably be able to chop apart the enemy formation with just a single blow! Alas, actually unleashing that much power from the quintessence core was far too difficult. Ning would probably have to reach the same level of sword-arts as World God Northrest in order to command such power.

In truth, Ning was already quite formidable. World God Blackmist was no ordinary World-level expert, after all.

Generally speaking, World Gods were more formidable than Chaos Immortals. This was because most World Gods also trained as Ki Refiner as well! World God Blackmist in particular was an expert of the Dao of the

Sword and incredibly skilled in launching offensive attacks. For Ning to be comparable to him in might was absolutely incredible.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

World God Blackmist and Ji Ning simultaneously launched their respective killer moves.

The way in which World God Blackmist was fighting was completely different from when he had been sparring with Ning. He had manifested a total of six arms and was striking with six swords in an endless windmill of attacks, sending six streaks of sword-light against his opponents in a constant barrage.

As for Ning, he wielded Violetjewel as he furiously struck out with the Heavenbreaker stance once more.

BOOM!

The simultaneous double attack from two experts of the Dao of the Sword caused all thousand Elder Gods to once more tremble and come to a halt. Although every single Elder God only had to endure a tiny part of their blows, the difference between them and the World-level experts was simply too great. Now that Ning and Blackmist had joined forces, the power of their blows made the Elder Gods feel absolutely miserable. They had been completely suppressed in power.

“These formations truly are incredible. Even when World God Blackmist and I join forces, we’re still merely able to just keep them suppressed.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh to himself.

Ning and Blackmist had joined together to completely shut down this Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation, making it so that those thousand Elder Gods were completely unable to help protect Chaos Immortal Owlsoar.

“How can this be? How?!” The terrified Chaos Immortal Owlsoar immediately turned tail and transformed into a streak of black light, intent on fleeing.

“Do you think you can actually escape me?” The Starlord’s handsome face was now somewhat twisted by savagery. In fact, he could be described as looking rather crazed. “Owlsoar, I’ve waited for this day for far too long!”

BOOOM!!!!

The Starlord’s entire body suddenly radiated with brilliant light. The astral light swept forward and caught Immortal Owlsoar within it, making it so that his movements became dramatically slower, almost as though he was moving through quicksand.

“N-no...spare me!” Chaos Immortal Owlsoar had learned quite some time ago that there was a huge gap in power between himself and the Starlord.

“Die.”

The Starlord sent six streaks of sword-light straight towards him in a series of consecutive blows.

The terrified Immortal Owlsoar sought to use his ritual tower to defend, even summoning his other two Dao weapons as well...but alas, those two weapons were clearly inferior to the ritual tower.

Clang! Clang! He was able to just barely block the first two sword attacks.

Slash.

The third strike plunged deep into his forehead, and as it did so a terrifying sword-intent erupted forth into the Jindan chaos region inside his body. The Jindan chaos region began to break apart, and the Dao-tree inside of it was also beginning to be obliterated.

“No...” A look of resentment and disbelief was in Immortal Owlsoar’s eyes as his life aura rapidly began to weaken.

The Starlord pulled his sword out of Owlsoar’s forehead. As he stared at Owlsoar’s corpse, he fell silent and said not a word.

# Chapter 42: Blacklotus

“Excellent!” World God Blackmist and Ji Ning were both delighted by what they saw.

The Starlord of Fogstone stared at Immortal Owlsoar’s corpse, his heart filled with many complicated feelings. He murmured softly to himself, “Yi, I’ve finally slain Owlsoar.”

“What? Owlsoar died?”

“Owlsoar died?”

The other four World-level vassals of God Emperor Blacklotus sensed Owlsoar’s powerful aura vanish from the battlefield. The entire city only held a total of fifteen World-level experts! There was a tremendous difference in power between them and Elder Gods. For one such aura to suddenly be extinguished caused the Blacklotus Empire’s forces to feel alarmed.

If one of them had died...then the Starlord and World God Blackmist would now be free to strike at the others.

The situation would just grow uglier and uglier.

“Don’t panic.” A voice suddenly rang out within the minds of the four World-level experts.

“Blacklotus, what should we do now?” The other four were all growing worried.

The enormous black lotus swiveled below God Emperor Blacklotus’ feet while a thousand Elder Gods surrounded and protected him. Although Immortal Abyssus, Immortal Skyrum, and World God Goldcloud had joined forces against him, they still found it hard to do anything to him.

God Emperor Blacklotus had an ugly look on his face.

He was in control of all the formations protecting this entire city and thus he knew better than anyone else what was happening in each part of the city. Immortal Owlsoar had simply died too quickly. As soon as Ji Ning

had entered the fray, Immortal Owlsoar had been almost instantly slain by the Starlord.

“I never would’ve thought that an Elder God would be able to force me to do this...” God Emperor Blacklotus murmured softly to himself.

Even with the formation strengthening him, Ning was still merely on par with World God Blackmist.

However, the Blacklotus Empire had been at a disadvantage this entire time. Ning’s suddenly burst of power was the last straw that broke the camel’s back!

“Have I been in retirement for too long?” God Emperor Blacklotus suddenly manifested a total of twenty-four arms, each of his arms coming together to form a mudra.

BOOM!!!!

A terrifying aura of power instantly burst forth from his body.

“What?!” Immortal Abyssus, Immortal Skyram, and World God Goldcloud had been unable to do anything against God Emperor Blacklotus this entire time...and now, their faces blanched.

“This aura. T-this...” Immortal Abyssus stared in astonishment at God Emperor Blacklotus. He had travelled through many territories and experienced many dangerous situations. Right now, God Emperor Blacklotus was giving him a sense of tremendous danger. “He’s actually this powerful? Then why has he squirreled himself away within his Blacklotus Empire for all these years? We are in trouble now! No wonder he was able to so casually produce two of those Elder God Formations!”

As soon as the Starlord slew Immortal Owlsoar, the God Emperor’s aura began to explode with power. This immediately snapped the Starlord out of his reverie and cleared his mind.

“What a terrifying aura.” The Starlord was shocked.

He was tremendously talented and had great affinity for the Dao of the Sword. He was now also a master-class World God, which meant he was



unquestionably one of the top-tier World Gods around. However, the Starlord also knew that his level of power wasn't THAT special; World Gods who had Eternal weapons or who had incredibly monstrous divine abilities would still be able to completely dwarf him in power. And now, it seemed as though God Emperor Blacklotus had just activated a secret art that was so powerful, its aura alone was enough to cause the Starlord to feel nervousness.

"Second Uncle, Ji Ning, hurry up and wipe out this formation," the Starlord immediately ordered. "God Emperor Blacklotus is unfathomably powerful. We need to wipe out his other supporters, then encircle and slay him!"

As soon as he had sensed the God Emperor's aura, the Starlord immediately understood that although he himself was also quite powerful, he probably wasn't a match for the God Emperor in single combat. The Starlord was rather stunned. How was this God Emperor Blacklotus so powerful?! Still, it was too late for regrets.

"Alright." World God Blackmist had turned solemn as well. "Ji Ning, let's attack."

"Right."

Violetjewel in hand, Ning had already turned his gaze towards those thousand Elder Gods, focusing in particular on the Mindlord.

"Kill them!" The Starlord bellowed as he flew through the air, moving far faster than even Ji Ning. Astral light radiated from every part of his body, those specks of light shooting out like countless tiny stars.

As the astral light spread out, they exerted their power upon the Elder Gods, constricting them.

"Flee!"

"We need to flee!"

"Separate and flee!"

The Mindlord and the others began to flee in every direction. They had

realized long ago that this new Elder God who had joined the fray was merely on par with World God Blackmist, but the Starlord of Fogstone was far more powerful than either of them. If World God Blackmist and Ji Ning were already capable of suppressing them, then once the Starlord joined in they would definitely be shattered.

“No.”

“Damn!”

“Imperial Majesty, save us!”

The Elder Gods scattered in every which way, but they still were merely able to watch as the Starlord, Blackmist, and Ji Ning chased after them. All three of them moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos, while the thousand Elder Gods were much slower in comparison.

“Die!” The Starlord let out a cold shout as he struck out with his sword.

Whoosh! A dazzling river of stars appeared in midair, coming together to form a gigantic sword that cleaved down upon the back of a fleeing Elder God.

Boom! Boom! Ji Ning and World God Blackmist struck out at the same time as this blow landed.

The Mindlord was one of the captains of these thousand Elder Gods, and as such he was able to flee faster than most of the others. For the sake of ensuring that his blow would land at the same time as the Starlord’s, Ning had no choice but to just attack the Elder God closest to him.

BOOM!!!!

The bodies of all thousand Elder Gods shook.

“Urgh.” More than ten of the Elder Gods spat out a mouthful of blood. Cracks appeared on their faces and blood began to pour out of them.

Every single one of the thousand Elder Gods had to endure the same amount of power from the attacks. At a time like this, the weakest would be the first to perish! The Mindlord and others who had powerful protective divine abilities would be able to hold on for much longer than

the rest.

“Again!” The Starlord sent mentally.

“Ahhhh!”

“We’re doomed.”

“No.”

Some of the already heavily-wounded Elder Gods began to panic...but alas, there was nowhere to run.

Yet another dazzling stream of stars split the skies and chopped down towards an Elder God.

Ji Ning and Blackmist struck out with their full power as well.

At this moment, God Emperor Blacklotus’ twenty-four arms completed their mudras. His terrifying aura skyrocketed even further, covering virtually the entire city.]

“Everyone dies eventually.” God Emperor Blacklotus could sense the despair of his thousand Elder Gods. He let out a soft sigh. “I bid you farewell on your next journey. I’ll take revenge for you.” The Elder Gods were simply too far away, and he was still surrounded by those three World-level powers, with Chaos Immortal Abyssus being particularly tough. Thus, not even God Emperor Blacklotus would be able to save those thousand Elder Gods in time.

“Blacklotus, although you are powerful, you are taking us a little too lightly,” Immortal Abyssus said with a cold laugh.

God Emperor Blacklotus gently waved his hand.

Whoosh.

The black fog permeating every part of the entire city began to vanish, revealing all of the countless buildings in it. Of course, the majority of the buildings had already been wrecked by now.

“Eh?” Chaos Immortal Abyssus, Chaos Immortal Skyrum, and World God Goldcloud were all secretly shocked.

The black fog covering the entirety of the imperial capital had made it impossible for them to get a good picture of their surroundings. Only the Starlord had been able to scan the entire area, thanks to his astral light permeating the entire area...but now, the God Emperor had actually dismissed the black fog. Clearly, he no longer wished to bother with using any minor tricks. This was a display of utmost confidence in his superiority.

“You are right. I really don’t treat the three of you seriously at all.” God Emperor Blacklotus frowned slightly. He could sense that six of the weakest Elder Gods had just been slain. Although the core and the nine captains were still present and were able to just barely keep the formation up, it would now be even harder for them to withstand any attacks. All of the Elder Gods had already begun to panic and flee.

“The three of you...who do you think you are?”

“In years past...more than a few World-level experts died by my hand!” God Emperor Blacklotus said calmly, “I came to the Badlands Territory, set up a little empire for myself, and just wanted to reign here in peace. I never would’ve thought that trouble would come crashing down out of nowhere.”

“Fine, then. I’ll wipe out the entire Fogstone lineage and let the cultivators of the Badlands Territory know exactly how powerful I am.”

When Abyssus, Skyrum, and Goldcloud heard these words, they couldn’t help but turn to look at each other.

These words were a bit too brash, weren’t they?

Wipe them all out?

What did he take the nine World-level experts of Fogstone to be?

“Prepare to receive a blow from me.” God Emperor Blacklotus’ aura began to surge outwards. Whooooosh. Instead, a series of black lotuses began to bloom in the area around him. Countless black lotuses emerged, causing an area of a million kilometers around him to transform into an enormous pool of lotuses. These black lotuses radiated a tremendous

killing intent that surged towards the three World-level experts.

“This is the first stance of the Forbidden Black Lotus...Lotus Sea.” A calm look of supreme confidence could be seen in God Emperor Blacklotus’ eyes.

# Chapter 43: Slaying the Mindlord

The black lotuses bloomed throughout the area, carrying a unique sort of charm.

However, Immortal Abyssus, Immortal Skyram, and World God Goldcloud weren't in the mood for enjoying their beauty. Immortal Abyssus hurriedly sent a mental message to the hundred Elder Gods surrounding him. "Hurry up and retreat. Don't get involved in this."

"Yes." The hundred Elder Gods could sense that things were turning dangerous. They didn't dare to push it too far.

"Go." Immortal Abyssus waved his hand, causing a semi-translucent cloth banner to fly out. The cloth banner flew through the air, instantly covering the skies as an enormous number of divine runes began to flow through it. The semi-translucent cloth banner began to emanate streams of gloomy white light that completely suppressed the countless black lotuses. The lotuses tried to push them back, but the light of the cloth banner was extraordinarily tough.

"I've always heard that Immortal Abyssus of the Fogstone Dominion is unfathomable in his power, but I didn't think that you'd be able to withstand the first stance of my Forbidden Black Lotus." God Emperor Blacklotus spoke out calmly, but the murderous aura which had once pervaded him when he had roamed through the various territories was beginning to slowly reveal itself.

"He managed to block it." World God Goldcloud and Immortal Skyram were both overjoyed.

Both of them had started to panic just now. They could sense that if they were completely surrounded by those countless black lotuses, they would most likely die within them.

"Brother Skyram, Brother Goldcloud, this God Emperor Blacklotus is far too strong. He's already forced me to take out my most powerful treasure," Immortal Abyssus sent mentally. "I'm already at my limit. Listen to my instructions. As long as we can hang on for a bit longer, the Starlord will

soon arrive. With him by our side, we will no longer need to fear God Emperor Blacklotus.”

“Right.” Immortal Skyrain and World God Goldcloud both held great faith in Immortal Abyssus. In the past, they knew he was strong but were uncertain as to how strong he actually was. Now they realized that he was strong enough to block those countless black lotuses that had inspired such terror in them.

“Ahaha...” God Emperor Blacklotus let out a laugh. “Now, try out the second stance of my Forbidden Black Lotus. This stance is known as ‘Lotus Hell’.”

His voice echoed throughout the skies and by the ears of the three World-level experts.

Whoosh....

Suddenly, one black lotus after another began to descend from the skies. Countless black lotuses descended, and as they did so they were actually beginning to resonate with the countless black lotuses on the ground that had been suppressed by Immortal Abyssus.

“Starlord, hurry over here!” Immortal Abyssus blanched as he hurriedly commanded the cloth banner to send out light to both suppress the black lotuses on the ground as well as the black lotuses falling from the skies. For a moment, he was able to establish a defensive perimeter and block the lotuses from every direction.

The Starlord knew that time was of the essence, and so he struck out with two sword at maximum speed, slaying six of the weakest Elder Gods in the Elder God Formation.

“Second Uncle, Ji Ning, let’s go. We need to get over there right now.” After breaking through the formation, the Starlord immediately waved his hand, causing dozens of streaks of sword-light to chop out towards the Elder Gods closest to him.

“Alright,” World God Blackmist said.

“Starlord, I’ll go right away, but first I need to kill the Mindlord.” Ning

didn't immediately follow behind him, instead flying at maximum speed towards the terrified, fleeing Mindlord.

The Starlord glanced backwards at Ning. Ning had said long ago when he had first joined the Fogstone Army that his goal was to kill the Mindlord. "Fine. Hurry up and get rid of the Mindlord, then come join us right away." Ji Ning was now an important member of their force. The other six formation commanders were merely comparable to ordinary World Gods, while Ji Ning was comparable to World God Blackmist, an expert of the Dao of the Sword. He could be considered an expert amongst World Gods.

"Alright," Ning said.

Swoosh.

Ning moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos, furiously chasing after the Mindlord.

"Why is this happening? Why?!" The Mindlord was frantically fleeing, but the Starlord's astral light was slowing him down too much. Ning caught up to him almost instantly.

"Ji Ning, spare me! Ji Ning!"

The Mindlord began to beg for his life. Earlier, when the Starlord had broken apart the formation, he had slain quite a few Elder Gods before heading off towards the other World-level experts. The entire Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation had collapsed, resulting the Mindlord becoming much weaker as well.

"I gifted you my [Heart Sutra] long ago!" The Mindlord sent frantically. When he was in the guise of Old Man Yuan in the Three Realms, he had put on a truly flawless act! He had helped train juniors, 'risked his life' for his friends, and acted exactly as the true Old Man Yuan had. This was why the Nuwa Alliance had never suspected a thing or seen any flaws in his masquerade.

In fact, Patriarch Subhuti's friendship with Old Man Yuan had only deepened!



He had casually bestowed the [Heart Sutra] to Ji Ning, but that was merely a manual with some extremely crude bits of information pertaining to heartforce. This was part of his usual act of pretending to be a kind old man!

“Die.”

Ning had already arrived, and his eyes flashed with murderous malice.

The Mindlord grew frantic.

“I’ve already informed one of my slaves about the Three Realms. Once I die, my slave’s lifeblood oath will compel him to immediately spread this information regarding the Three Realms. By then, quite a few adventurers of the Badlands Territory will probably set off towards it.” The Mindlord sent threateningly, “Eventually, an endless stream of adventurers will go from the Badlands to the Three Realms. It’ll be finished!”

Boom!

Sword-light flashed. Although the Mindlord was wearing armor, it was a very weak set of Chaos armor. There was no way it could withstand Ning’s full-force strike! Ning’s sword-light struck the Mindlord at the waist, chopping straight through the Chaos armor. The terrifying power of Violetjewel swept through the Mindlord’s entire body, wiping out all of his divine power as well as his truesoul.

Even when Ning was back in the Three Realms, his full-force blows were capable of piercing through top-grade Protocosmic treasures.

He now was strengthened by the azureflower mist energy, the World energy of his formation, and was wielding a fully repaired Eternal weapon. Even his sword-arts had improved! His full-force strikes were now completely capable of shattering ordinary Chaos treasures. If the Mindlord was wearing a suit of top-grade Chaos armor, Ning wouldn’t be able to chop through it, but the kinetic force of Ning’s blows would still be enough to reduce the Mindlord’s body to dust.

“I...” A look of true despair appeared in the Mindlord’s eyes.

Whoosh.

The two severed halves of his body suddenly broke apart and crumbled. Violetjewel's power was more than enough to cause his entire body to break apart.

"The Mindlord...is finally dead."

After slaying the Mindlord, Ning was momentarily dazed.

He could almost see his senior apprentice-brother Houyi in the moment of his truesoul's dissipation. He could almost see the other major powers of the Three Realms who had all transformed themselves into enormous suns.

"This troublemaker has finally been dealt with. My fellow Daoists... seniors...rest in peace."

Ning's heart was filled with many complicated feelings.

Was he happy?

Ning didn't feel even the slightest bit of happiness right now.

He felt disappointment and frustration.

He also felt a sense of release.

The Mindlord's death represented the true, final end to the great Endwar.

"He even dared to threaten me as he died." Ning glanced at the Mindlord's completely shattered corpse. The truesoul within the corpse had been wiped out, and there wasn't any hint of life in his body. "Even if you really did tell your servant about the Three Realms, so what? How many adventurers would dare to brave the spatial vortex tunnel between it and the Badlands Territory?"

"And even if they do brave it...so what?"

"My Primaltwin has also mastered and unified the Nine Chaos Seals. It is capable of using the azureflower mist energy and has the power of a World-level expert as well. It doesn't matter how many adventurers make it there; I'll kill them all," Ning murmured to himself. He didn't believe that any World-level experts would go adventuring in the Three Realms.

In addition...

Ning himself would eventually become a World-level expert as well, and the azureflower mist energy would guarantee that he was far stronger than most World-level experts.

“I really wonder how Daoist Three Purities managed to acquire those Nine Chaos Seals.” This thought briefly flitted through Ning’s mind.

Rumble...

Ripples of incredible power spread out from off in the distance.

Ning turned his head to look. The black fog had long ago dissipated, and so he was now able to see everything quite clearly. The astral light from the planet of Fogstone continued to shine down upon the city, revealing the scene of Immortal Abyssus, Immortal Skyram, World God Goldcloud, the Starlord of Fogstone, and World God Blackmist all fighting against God Emperor Blacklotus.

The most dazzling figures were the Starlord and the God Emperor.

“Attack!” Each blow of his sword struck out like a stream of stars, leaving a trail of shattered black lotuses behind them. The Starlord was able to destroy more than half of the black lotuses by himself. He was so powerful that he was roughly comparable to the other four allied World-level experts combined.

As for God Emperor Blacklotus, he stood in the center, the enormous nine-petal black lotus below his feet still slowly swiveling. Even now, it was the God Emperor who was attacking while the other five were defending.

“Ji Ning, hurry over here and help protect Abyssus.” As soon as Ning slew the Mindlord, the Starlord of Fogstone immediately urged him to come.

“Acknowledged.” Ning transformed into a streak of light, moving faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos as he charged straight towards the most terrifying place on the battlefield.

# Chapter 44: Supreme World God

As Ji Ning moved closer to the battlefield, he saw those countless black lotuses bloom and then be smashed apart. He couldn't help but feel a hint of fear.

"Senior Abyssus." Ning immediately flew towards Immortal Abyssus.

"Sorry for the trouble, my young friend."

Immortal Abyssus smiled towards Ning, then once more turned his full attention towards controlling his swirling cloth banner. The cloth banner looked quite ordinary, but it made it so that the black lotuses weren't able to move past it in the slightest. Of course, this was primarily because the Starlord of Fogstone had charged to the very forefront of the battle, destroying the majority of the black lotuses before they were even able to get close to him.

"Should I just stand here and watch?" Once Ning arrived next to Immortal Abyssus, he felt rather puzzled. The others were all launching furious counter-attacks against the black lotuses.

"Yes, just stand here and watch for now," Immortal Abyssus sent mentally. "Don't be deceived by the fact that I'm able to block these attacks. I'm almost at my absolute limit. If God Emperor Blacklotus was just a bit more powerful, I wouldn't be able to hold them back any longer... and as a Chaos Immortal, I'm much weaker in close combat."

Ning nodded.

Pure Chaos Immortals were innately weaker than World Gods. Most World Gods were dual refiners, giving them an overall advantage.

"Ji Ning, all you need to do is help protect Abyssus." The Starlord's voice rang out within Ning's mind.

"Acknowledged." Ning understood.

Ning began to simply watch the battle, while all the others such as Immortal Abyssus went all out.

As for God Emperor Blacklotus, his eyes were filled with a murderous intent. He showed no mercy in his attacks at all.

“It seems as though God Emperor Blacklotus is extremely strong,” Ning mused to himself. “The Starlord seems to be slightly weaker than him. Immortal Abyssus is right behind the Starlord! After him should be World God Blackmist. World God Goldcloud and Immortal Skyrum are both significantly weaker.”

Ning could clearly see the difference in power between the various World-level experts.

Just as Ning was watching...

The stalemate had clearly angered God Emperor Blacklotus, who suddenly let out a furious roar: “Forbidden Black Lotus, third stance... Blacklotus World!”

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. The countless black lotuses had been falling from the skies and rising from the ground. Now, however, every single inch of space on the ground or in the air within a million kilometers began to manifest the black lotuses. The black lotuses even began to appear next to Immortal Abyssus and Ji Ning.

“Not good.”

“Careful.”

Everyone’s faces changed.

Immortal Abyssus immediately acted, willing an enormous black shadow to swirl around him and cover Ji Ning as well. The black shadow covered an area of roughly three hundred meters, and all the black lotuses in the area covered by the black shadow were immediately shattered.

Things weren’t so bad for World God Blackmist and World God Goldcloud. They were World Gods, after all; even though a few attacks made it through their defenses, they were able to hold on.

“Careful!” The Starlord was forced to divert some of his energy to protecting Immortal Skyrum.

“All of you will die.”

God Emperor Blacklotus had a sinister look on his face as he stood there atop the enormous, slowly swiveling nine-petal lotus. The area around him had become completely filled with the trillions on trillions of small black lotuses, all of which were furiously striking out towards his World-level enemies.

Immortal Abyssus continued to use his illusory shadow, blocking out all lotuses within its range.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Countless black lotuses smashed towards the illusory shadow in an endless stream, exploding as they struck it.

“Darknorth, my young friend.” Immortal Abyssus’ face tightened. “I’ll use my magic treasures to block these lotuses as best I can, but if any slip through I need you to help me stop them. Try to minimize the number that end up striking against my Shadow Idol.”

While speaking mentally with Ning, Immortal Abyssus immediately took control over the cloth banner once more.

Part of the cloth banner separated from the rest of it, then coiled around Immortal Abyssus, blocking more than 90% of the black lotuses that had been striking towards him. Alas, some of the black lotuses materialized inside its defenses, and so the closest black lotuses continued to stream towards the enormous illusory shadow.

“Leave it to me.” Ning’s body momentarily blurred as he transformed to become three hundred meters tall. He struck out with Violetjewel, which pierced out beyond the protection of the illusory shadow and set up a protective barrier of sword-light that covered more than half of the empty space.

The sword-light transformed into a black hole, continuously weakening the power of the assaulting black lotuses.

The true, terrifying power of the Heartsword stance was now on full display. Ning had absolutely perfect control over his sword, especially the ‘Soleheart stance’ of the [Brightmoon] sword-art, which was a technique

which focused on defense. As a result, when the black lotuses struck him, they did so after 90% of their power had been ablated. The remaining 10% was then mostly absorbed by the World energy that protected him, with the tiny remaining amount of energy being spread across a thousand Elder Gods. By then, there was only a tiny bit of power remaining.

“Whew.” Immortal Abyssus relaxed slightly.

With Ning helping him defend against the majority of the black lotuses, things were now much easier for him as well.

Things weren't so bad for Ning and Immortal Abyssus, but this was primarily due to Immortal Abyssus' usage of the cloth banner and the Shadow Idol. All Ning had to do was provide a bit of help in order to ensure that they would survive the danger.

“God Emperor Blacklotus is far too powerful. He's able to fight against multiple World-level experts by himself and actually have the upper hand.” Ning stared past the swiveling cloth banner and stared at the distant God Emperor Blacklotus.

“Blacklotus!” The Starlord suddenly let out an angry roar.

His handsome face actually began to turn a grayish-white color, as did his hands. His entire body seemed to become almost statue-like as his aura suddenly exploded with might. His six arms wielded six swords, and he sent them forth as utterly dazzling streams of stars. He was using the same sword-arts as before, but the power of his attacks had increased tenfold!

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Countless black lotuses were blasted apart as the sword-light easily chopped through them. The sword-light slashed all the way to God Emperor Blacklotus' side and struck directly at the enormous nine-petal black lotus.

Boom! Boom! Boom! When the slowly swiveling black lotus was struck by the terrifying sword-light, it began to shudder slightly.

“So this is the [Fogstone Apocalypse] of the Fogstone Dominion, eh?”

God Emperor Blacklotus was startled as well.

“Attack!” The Starlord’s skin had now completely turned the color of stone. His aura grew even more savage, and his blows even began to cause cracks to appear on the nine-petal black lotus.

“The [Fogstone Apocalypse].” Ning was secretly surprised by what he saw. “And he’s using the third stage of it.”

The third stage of the [Fogstone Apocalypse] involved transforming the entire body into stone. It would allow the user to become tremendously more powerful, with the body becoming comparable to a Dao weapon in toughness. However, this sort of explosive technique resulted in a rapid consumption of divine power. Once the divine power was used up, one would transform into a true statue forever. Thus, this divine ability generally wouldn’t be used until things were truly dire.

The Starlord had clearly grown nervous upon seeing that the five of them were at such a disadvantage.

“He truly has reached full mastery of his skills.” Immortal Abyssus sighed in amazement and nodded. “The Starlord hasn’t trained for very long, but this divine ability alone ensures that he is a master-class World God.”

“Master-class?” Ning was puzzled.

God Emperor Blacklotus was now being completely suppressed by the Starlord’s attacks. No more black lotuses were appearing around Ning and Abyssus. Clearly, the God Emperor was now focused on his own defenses.

“Yes.” Immortal Abyssus nodded and smiled. “There are differences in power amongst World-level experts, and they can be divided into several rough categories.”

“The first level is the level of brand new World-level experts. They are young, inexperienced, and quite weak. They can be described as having just barely reached the World-level threshold.”

“The second level is the ordinary level which most World-level experts are at! This is a level which every single World-level expert can reach after



they spend a bit of time in training.”

“The third level can be described as the elite level! Blackmist, for example, is at this level, thanks to the fact that he has the body of a World God and is skilled in the offensive Dao of the Sword. I’m actually at this level as well, but I have a few more tricks up my sleeve than he does, which is why I’m a bit stronger than him.”

“The fourth level is the level of full mastery! Both the Starlord and God Emperor Blacklotus can be described as master-class World Gods.”

Ning nodded. “Are there any higher levels?”

“There are. If either of them had an Eternal weapon, they could be described as supreme World Gods,” Immortal Abyssus said. “This is a fairly widespread classification system used in these Endless Territories. As for why they are classified in this manner...once you reach the World level, you will understand.”

Ning nodded.

He wasn’t a World God yet. He naturally didn’t understand the cultivation mysteries of World-level experts.

Based on Immortal Abyssus’ classifications...World God Northrest was most likely a supreme World God! As for the deceased slave he had seen in that house by the lake inside the Windsource Ruins, he was probably a supreme World God as well.

“Are there any who are more powerful than even ‘supreme’ World-level experts?” Ning was curious.

“There are.” Immortal Abyssus nodded. “But you won’t possibly be able to understand why those World Gods are as powerful as they are. Some are World Gods who have unleashed the full power of their Eternal weapons, while some have cultivation paths that we can’t fathom. Perhaps they might have gained some particularly incredible legacies! However, those figures are nothing more than legends. I’ve wandered through many territories, but I’ve only seen just one of those terrifying figures. In our Badlands Territory, not a single one of them exists. Thus, to be a supreme

World God is already quite incredible.”

Ning nodded secretly to himself. No wonder World God Northrest was such an incredible figure! Alas, in the end he had still fallen.

# Chapter 45: Eternal Weapon

The morale of the Fogstone Dominion was soaring.

“Break for me!” His entire body a grayish-white color, the Starlord of Fogstone waved his hand, unleashing streams of astral sword-light against the enormous black lotus, causing it to begin to crack apart and crumble. God Emperor Blacklotus continued to stand atop the black lotus, allowing this to happen. He murmured softly, “I heard that the [Fogstone Apocalypse] is just something derived from fragmentary records of an ancient technique. And yet, it is this powerful? I wonder how powerful the true, complete technique was.”

Quite a number of Fogstone’s supreme techniques were incomplete.

[Dust of the Mortal World] was one.

[Fogstone Apocalypse] was another.

Ning’s own [Nameless] sword-art was just a fragment of the true, complete technique as well.

The reason why so many techniques only existed in fragmentary parts was because they were simply too profound. There was no way to completely memorize them! Daoist Three Purities had an incredibly high level of insight into the Dao, but it still took him countless years before he was able to completely memorize the Nine Chaos Seals, which Ning had already merged together into one.

However, techniques like [Dust of the Mortal World] and the [Nameless] sword-art were ancient techniques which even Daolords would sigh with amazement upon seeing. There was no way a World God could possibly have the ability to completely memorize such a technique; he could at most just memorize part of it.

Thanks to a stroke of tremendous luck, World God Northrest had been able to view the [Nameless] sword-art, but he was only at a level where he could memorize its first seven stances. He wasn’t able to memorize any of the rest of it at all.

“Against you? It’ll be enough.” The Starlord surged with a killing intent.

“You overestimate yourself.” The God Emperor looked at the Starlord coldly. “I didn’t want to use this treasure. I thought I could defeat you just by using a few secret arts...but it seems I’ll still be forced to activate it. It’s been a long, long time since I’ve truly fought someone.”

God Emperor Blacklotus stretched out his right hand. Whoosh. A crystalline scimitar that seemed to have been carved out from a block of ice suddenly appeared in his hand. The scimitar was roughly three feet long.

Whoosh!

An unspeakable aura instantly filled the entire city. In fact, the aura spread out past the city and covered an enormous region beyond it as well.

The entire battlefield fell silent.

Cold!

Every single cultivator, be it the Elder Gods, the World Gods, or the Chaos Immortals, felt an icy cold feeling in their hearts.

“Is that...” All the cultivators turned their heads to stare at the origin of this feeling of icy terror. They saw that frozen crystal scimitar in God Emperor Blacklotus’ hand, as well as the glimmer of azure light flowing over its surface. Every single cultivator felt their hearts shudder when they merely looked at the scimitar.

“What is that?” Ning’s heart was shaking as well.

“That is an Eternal weapon.” The nearby Immortal Abyssus had turned completely pale. “That’s an Eternal weapon. I’ve seen the power of an Eternal weapon before, and this gives me exactly the same feeling. When you see an Eternal weapon, you’ll immediately lose all your courage.”

“An Eternal weapon.” The faces of World God Blackmist, Immortal Skyrum, and the others all changed as well.

“How could he have an Eternal weapon?”

“How could God Emperor Blacklotus be this powerful?”

Everyone was dazed.

Eternal weapons were just legends to most World-level experts! The number of World-level experts in the entire Badlands Territory who possessed Eternal weapons could be counted on one hand. They either had incredible luck or had been bestowed it by a Daolord! It must be understood that most Daolords used Eternal weapons, and so for them to bestow one on a World-level expert was incredibly rare.

Whooooosh. An invisible, freezing intent filled the hearts of every single cultivator present.

“I’m also wielding an Eternal weapon, but none of the World-level experts paid it any attention. But now that God Emperor Blacklotus has taken one out, he has stunned the entire battlefield.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh. This was all because his attainments in the sword were simply too low. He was only able to unleash just a tiny fraction of the power within Violetjewel’s quintessence core, so little that no one even paid attention to it.

If he was as powerful as World God Northrest, who was able to unleash thirty to forty percent of Violetjewel’s quintessence core, he’d be able to inspire terror in other World-level experts just by standing there with the sword in his hands.

“A supreme World God. I never would’ve thought that God Emperor Blacklotus is this powerful.” A frantic look was in Immortal Abyssus’ eyes.

“Blacklotus.”

The Starlord withdrew, slowly stepping backwards as he looked at God Emperor Blacklotus.

“Why are you retreating?” God Emperor Blacklotus asked calmly.

“I admit defeat,” the Starlord said in a low voice. “I’m willing to pay a high price to stay your hand and quell your rage, God Emperor Blacklotus.”

As a cultivator, one had to know when to advance and when to retreat. To continue the battle when there was such a large disparity in power was

just suicide.

“Hahaha...” God Emperor Blacklotus laughed. “A high price? As far as I’m concerned, the Fogstone lineage is worth nothing! Oh, wait. I actually rather like the planet of Fogstone itself. Hand over the planet and I’ll let you leave.”

“Impossible. God Emperor Blacklotus, you should know that the planet of Fogstone is a legacy treasure of the Fogstone lineage. Someone who is not of our lineage cannot bind or control it,” the Starlord said.

This was the truth.

In the past, the Fogstone lineage had actually been completely wiped out by enemies before. However, once the major powers of the Fogstone lineage who were out exploring in other territories returned, they would generally take revenge and retake their legacy treasure, resulting in the lineage continuing to be passed down. Starchild’s own father, the previous Starlord, was someone who had gone out exploring as well.

This was the custom of the Fogstone lineage. Once they reached a certain level of power, they would leave and go out adventuring in the primordial chaos. After a few dozen chaos cycles passed, they might eventually return to Fogstone, ensuring that its lineage would remain unbroken.

Their most important legacy treasure was the planet itself, and one had to have mastered certain core techniques in order to bind the planet. These core techniques were never taught to outsiders.

“I’m willing to offer treasure that is worth three thousand cubes of primordial chaos,” the Starlord said hurriedly.

“Do you think I care?” God Emperor Blacklotus lifted the scimitar up.

The Starlord’s face turned even uglier.

“When I journeyed through the primordial chaos, I passed through many territories and took on many masters. And yet, in the end I remained unable to take that final step to the next level. I no longer hold any hope of becoming a Samsara Daolord.” God Emperor Blacklotus said softly,

“And so I returned to the Badlands Territory. It had changed significantly since my departure from it. In fact, when I was born here, it wasn’t even called the Badlands Territory...”

“I simply chose a random location and set up a little empire for myself, intending to rule over it in peace...and yet, trouble chose to come knocking on my door.”

“It seems that I’ve been too...benevolent.”

“To tell you the truth, I had a nickname when I roamed the primordial chaos. ‘Daoist Blacklotus’,” the God Emperor said.

“Daoist Blacklotus?” Immortal Abyssus sent mentally, “Careful, I know who he is now! He’s a true fiend, a demon who delights in slaughter and who walks the path of evil. Don’t put too much faith in his promises. He’s an extremely temperamental person who has killed many World-level experts. It’s been a long time since anyone has heard any news regarding him. I never would’ve thought that he had actually come to the Badlands Territory and set up an empire for himself to rule over.”

“Daoist Blacklotus?” None of the other World-level experts, including the Starlord, knew what this name and title represented.

However, the Starlord and the others knew what they had to do.

God Emperor Blacklotus shook his head. “Still, I’m willing to be benevolent one final time. I’ll give you two choices.”

“The first choice is for all of you to hand over all of your treasures, including the planet of Fogstone and the treasures and techniques it contains,” God Emperor Blacklotus said. “I’ll spare your lives.”

“The other choice is death.” God Emperor Blacklotus had a very calm look in his eyes. The lineage of Fogstone truly was an ancient one. Perhaps it held certain techniques that might be of use to him. Although he didn’t really feel that he would be able to make any more breakthroughs, he was still willing to give it a try.

“The planet of Fogstone? All of the treasures and techniques it holds?” The Starlord’s skin once more transformed to become grayish-white. He

couldn't possibly hand those things over, because he had sworn a lifeblood oath upon joining the lineage. If he violated it, the lifeblood oath would immediately take his life. It was impossible.

"Attack!" The Starlord's entire body had turned grayish-white, and his eyes were filled with a murderous frenzy.

"I've already taken revenge for Yi, so let's have a good fight. I want to see just how powerful an Eternal weapon is!" The Starlord charged forwards in a frenzy.

As he did so...

"Run!"

"All of you, run!"

"I'll hold him down. The rest of you, go hide within the planet of Fogstone. He won't be able to do anything to you once you go inside!" The Starlord's voice simultaneously rang out within the minds of Ji Ning, Immortal Abyssus, World God Blackmist, the other World-level experts, and the minds of the many Elder Gods as well.

Rumble...

The enormous planet which had been hanging in the sky suddenly came crashing downwards.

Ning and the others all understood that the planet of Fogstone was definitely filled with formations and protective spells that were far more powerful than the ones which had been protecting the imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire. If they could make it inside, they would be safe! The Starlord of Fogstone was the most powerful person on their side; he was the only one who had a chance of stopping God Emperor Blacklotus.

"He wishes to stop me? To hold me down?" God Emperor Blacklotus held that enormous crystal scimitar in his hands as he strode forward, his voice echoing in the ears of every single cultivator present. "You really do have a fine Starlord. A pity, though...he won't succeed. All of you will die."



# Chapter 46: Shield You From the Wind and the Rain

God Emperor Blacklotus showed no mercy at all as he struck out with the giant crystal scimitar. Whoosh! A streak of icy saber-light shot out through the air, carrying an aura of extreme coldness as it flew towards the Starlord. The Starlord's body was now completely grayish-white, and he hurriedly shot out streaks of astral sword-light to defend.

Boom!!!

The Starlord was knocked flying backwards as the saber-light slashed past his chest. Fortunately, his body was as tough as a Dao weapon and so he was able to endure the blow.

"You can't stop me. In a head-on fight, you have no chance of stopping me at all." God Emperor Blacklotus smiled coldly.

The Starlord was beginning to panic.

He truly was a blessed child of the heavens! His father had been the previous Starlord, while World God Blackmist had supported him and guided him. Even though he hadn't been particularly diligent in cultivating, he had still been able to easily overcome his tribulations. After his beloved Yi had perished, he had begun to work hard and improved at an even more astonishing speed, becoming a World God. He then continued until he reached his certain stage, resulting in his divine body reaching the stage of full perfection! He was now the most powerful expert of the Fogstone lineage.

His path had always been a path that led straight upwards! Thus, his most powerful sword-arts were all focused on offensive attacks, making him somewhat weaker in defensive skills. The Starlord had always believed the old maxim that the best defense was a good offense! When he used the [Fogstone Apocalypse] his body was rendered comparable to a Dao weapon. Why, then, should he waste his time and effort on mastering defensive sword-arts? Only when he focused his efforts in the right area

would he be able to more quickly reach a higher level of power.

But now...

He had encountered someone who was so superior to him that his vaunted attacks were useless! At a time like this, only someone tremendously talented in defensive sword arts would be capable of dealing with such a difficult foe.

Boom! The airborne Starlord was smashed downwards towards the ground.

“Let’s go.”

“Let’s get out of here.”

Quite a few Elder Gods immediately began to flee, not hesitating in the slightest. They all soared towards the skies, obeying the Starlord’s orders to flee.

However...the Starlord had misjudged one of them.

“Starchild.” World God Blackmist looked at the Starlord, a gentle look in his eyes. “You want me to flee?”

There was no way he would flee.

The previous Starlord had shown him great benevolence, which was why he had chosen to help take care of Starchild! At first, World God Blackmist had only done so in order to repay the old Starlord’s kindness, and so Starchild had called him ‘Second Uncle’. He had watched as the child slowly grew up, while the old Starlord himself had actually spent very little time with his son.

In the end...

It was World God Blackmist who spent virtually all of his time by Starchild’s side. He had watched as Starchild grew up, had shielded him from the wind and the rain, ensuring that he would live a carefree life! As for the death of Starchild’s Dao-companion, there was nothing that World God Blackmist could do about that. All he could do was silently support his young ward, hoping that this tragedy would encourage him to grow up

even faster.

It had been so many years.

Although he was nominally the child's 'second uncle', in reality Blackmist had spent far more time and effort on Starchild than the old Starlord ever had. He had been there when Starchild was a crying and screaming newborn, and he had watched as Starchild grew up. By now, Blackmist truly viewed Starchild as he would his own son.

At a time like this...the Starlord was going to defend them?

Was ordering him to flee?

How could he possibly flee?

However, World God Blackmist still felt a warm feeling in his heart.

Whoosh. World God Blackmist's body suddenly began to blaze with white light, and all of his skin instantly transformed to become a rocky-gray color as well.

"Starchild, retreat!" World God Blackmist let out a loud roar as he charged forwards.

Although Starchild was the Starlord, he had always obeyed his second uncle's instructions. Eventually, however, he had become a World God and become more powerful than his second uncle. It had been a long time since his second uncle had given him any orders.

The fact that he was doing so now caused Starchild to grow blank for a moment...and then he saw World God Blackmist charging forward, his entire body glowing with white light.

The look in Starchild's eyes instantly changed.

"Second Uncle!" Starchild's eyes instantly reddened. He was the current Starlord of Fogstone. He knew exactly what his second uncle had just done.

"Not even your Starlord is a match for me. You think you are?" God Emperor Blacklotus once more chopped downwards with his enormous crystal scimitar.

Ssssshrk. Whoosh!

Sword-light and saber-light clashed against each other.

World God Blackmist was different from Starchild. He had relied entirely on himself as he had grown up, with no one there to provide him with any protection. His sword-arts were unpredictable and savage, but also quite suited for defense. Still, even the most defensive of stances would be useless if the disparity in power was too great.

“Eh?” God Emperor Blacklotus was astonished to see that World God Blackmist was merely knocked a few steps back. “H-how is it that you...”

“Starchild, leave right now!” World God Blackmist sent mentally to the Starlord, who was standing there blankly.

The Starlord gritted his teeth, his eyes glistening with tears.

Second Uncle...

Thanks to his second uncle, he had never worried about anything as a child. His second uncle had always been by his side, and the Starlord had grown used to his presence. Upon seeing his second uncle's body be wreathed in white light, he immediately understood that his second uncle had just used the forbidden fourth stage of the [Fogstone Apocalypse]!

Right. The [Fogstone Apocalypse] actually had a fourth stage!

However, their [Fogstone Apocalypse] was a fragmented technique. Only the first three stages were complete, which was why using the first three stages posed no risks. Even when one used the third stage, so long as that person stopped before completely using up his divine power, he wouldn't turn into fogstone and die. However, their records of the fourth stage were incomplete. Although it was still usable...once it was used, the body would begin an uncontrollable transformation into fogstone!

In other words...once a cultivator used the fourth stage, he was doomed to die! This was why the Starlord had been so agonized and grief-struck upon seeing the white light wreathing World God Blackmist's body. There was no way to reverse this process at all.

“This is my choice, and there is no turning back. If you don’t wish for my death to have been for nothing, leave. Leave right now!” World God Blackmist roared furiously, “If you don’t run, I’ll have died for nothing! NOTHING!”

“Aaaaaaaaaaargh!” The Starlord let out an agonized howl, but he still turned and fled at high speed, charging into the skies.

He felt hatred and regret.

Why. Why!

Only now did he truly understand how important his second uncle was to him. His second uncle was his most beloved family member and just as important to him as Yi had been! Why? Why did it have to end up this way?

“Stay alive and forget about revenge. Only when you become a Daolord should you come and seek your revenge. Otherwise, I’ll never forgive you. Never!” World God Blackmist’s voice echoed in the Starlord’s mind.

The Starlord lowered his head to stare downwards, tears cascading down his face.

“Second Uncle...”

Boom!

Whoosh!

World God Blackmist continued to battle against God Emperor Blacklotus.

“What type of divine ability did you use just now?” God Emperor Blacklotus was now quite intrigued. He sent mentally, “You clearly are quite weak, but this divine ability actually allows you to be on par with your Starlord. For a divine ability to be capable of strengthening you this much...Fogstone really does have quite a few nice things.”

God Emperor Blacklotus did know that in the Endless Territories, there were a number of monstrously powerful forbidden divine abilities.

“Hand this divine ability over to me and I’ll spare your life,” God

Emperor Blacklotus sent mentally.

“Don’t even think about it!” World God Blackmist roared back.

To be honest, it wasn’t just that he didn’t want to hand it over. People like Ji Ning were only capable of acquiring the first and second stage, while the third stage came with many strict requirements. As for the fourth stage...only the most core members of the Fogstone lineage would have access to it. Although the fourth stage was fragmentary and incomplete, every generation of Starlords had done their best to repair it.

The fourth stage was simply too powerful. If they were capable of restoring it to the point where they could use it safely, it would be wonderful!

“You are now as strong as the Starlord, and your sword-arts are quite strange, but...do you think that’s enough to stop me?” God Emperor Blacklotus let out a furious roar as the giant scimitar in his hands suddenly unleashed hundreds of streaks of crescent saber-light, sending them swirling around World God Blackmist. Every single strike contained the power of his scimitar’s quintessence core.

“I have to be able to block them all. For the sake of Starchild, I have to block them all.” World God Blackmist was wielding six swords in his hands.

He had long ago stopped caring about whether or not he would survive.

In this moment, he felt a greater desire than he had ever felt in his entire life.

His six swords transformed into six streaks of utterly dazzling sword-light, criss-crossing in the area around him and forming an enormous sphere of black mist.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The hundreds of streaks of saber-light struck down upon the sphere of black mist. Although they carried tremendous power, World God Blackmist was completely capable of withstanding them.

“Y-you...” God Emperor Blacklotus stared in astonishment at World God

Blackmist. “You actually made a breakthrough?” Before this, World God Blackmist’s sword-arts were very unpredictable, but they weren’t as resilient and tenacious as they were now. His sword-arts had clearly improved to a brand new level, capable of enduring offensive blows as though they truly were made of mist.

This was a terrifyingly strong defensive sword-art. Although God Emperor Blacklotus was stronger than his opponent, he remained unable to break through his defenses.

“Yes. My sword-arts reached a bottleneck a long, long time ago...but fortunately, I was able to make a breakthrough today.” World God Blackmist revealed a relaxed, carefree smile. He was able to stop God Emperor Blacklotus’ attack. Starchild would be able to stay alive. It was enough.

# Chapter 47: None Shall Escape

At present, World God Blackmist was every bit the Starlord's equal in the Dao of the Sword. However, the Starlord focused on offensive attacks, whereas World God Blackmist specialized in defense.

His sword-light was like a web of black mist that filled the entire region. Although God Emperor Blacklotus held an absolute advantage, he was still unable to breach it!

“Damn.”

“Do you really think...that you can stop me?!”

“I, Blacklotus, spent countless years roaming across many territories. You think you can stop me with just a defensive technique like this? You underestimate me too much!” God Emperor Blacklotus turned his gaze towards the fleeing cultivators of the Fogstone Dominion, then let out a cold smile. “I trained as both a Fiendgod Body Refiner and a Ki Refiner!”

Rumble...

The entire imperial capital below them began to shudder, then slowly began to swivel. The city itself was in the shape of a nine-petal black lotus that covered an area of ten million kilometers. As the enormous black lotus swiveled, the entire Blacklotus Chaosworld began to shake. Countless black lotuses began to appear, and they covered the heavens and the earth as they furiously shot out towards the cultivators of the Fogstone Dominion.

“What's going on?!”

“This is even more terrifying than the secret arts he used earlier.”

“Why are there so many black lotuses?”

Ning and the others were all dazed as they stared downwards.

As the gigantic nine-petal black lotus below them swiveled, it emanated an aura of terrifying power that quickly spread over the entire chaosworld.

“My Daoist name was Blacklotus. My true skills do not lie in close



combat, nor was my reputation established because of this Eternal weapon. It was all because of my Dao, the Dao of the Black Lotus!" God Emperor Blacklotus smiled as every inch of the entire chaosworld began to shake. "The imperial capital of the Blacklotus Empire is actually a magic treasure which I used when I roamed through the Endless Territories. I poured all of my blood, sweat, and effort into it, and it contains my Dao."

"What?"

"It's a Dao weapon."

"His Dao?"

The fleeing cultivators all started to panic.

Usually, only Samsara Daolords were capable of forging Dao weapons! It was incredibly difficult for a World-level expert to forge a Dao weapon, but if a World-level expert successfully in doing so and infusing his own Dao into his creation he would have a weapon that was perfectly suited to him, allowing him to unleash tremendous power from it.

The deceased Immortal Owlsoar, for example, had murdered countless living beings to create that ritual tower of great sin. He had personally forged that ritual tower, and the mysteries of the Dao within it belonged to him and him alone, which was why he was quite powerful when using it. His insights into the Dao were quite average, but with that ritual tower in hand, he was actually on par with someone like World God Blackmist.

Some World-level experts who found themselves unable to make any more breakthroughs would generally focus most of their time, energy, and effort on forging a Dao weapon for themselves.

The same was true for God Emperor Blacklotus!

He had personally refined and forged this gigantic black lotus, infusing it with all of his insights into the Dao of the Black Lotus. When he used this new Dao weapon to execute his Forbidden Black Lotus technique, the power of the technique would increase dramatically.

However, after he acquired an Eternal weapon, he rarely saw the need to use his original Dao weapon. In fact, after arriving at the Badlands

Territory, he had actually transformed it to make it a hundred thousand kilometers in size and treated it as a city.

Although there were some cultivators who had a strange feeling about the city, as though the entire thing was just one giant treasure, none of them knew that this city actually contained all of the insights into the Dao of God Emperor Blacklotus.

“Now this...this is the true Blacklotus World.”

“Long ago, I set down restrictive spells on every part of this chaosworld. The chaosworld itself can become one with my magic treasure, creating a Blacklotus World of enormous proportions.” God Emperor Blacklotus smiled, but his eyes were filled with madness. “This...is a world of lotuses...”

The entire chaosworld was shaking. The earth had cracked apart in many places, revealing enormous formation leylines. The seas had parted, revealing divine runes that glowed with black light. The mountains had collapsed and the cities had crumbled. The entire chaosworld was like an enormous painting that had been filled with spells...and now, all of the formations that God Emperor Blacklotus had secretly set down long ago suddenly exploded in power.

Countless black lotuses began to take shape.

The activation of this formation alone resulted in trillions of living beings on this chaosworld dying. God Emperor Blacklotus didn't kill them on purpose, but he also wasn't willing to weaken the power of his mightiest attack, the 'Blacklotus World', just to keep them safe.

The black lotuses filled every inch of the entire chaosworld, and they furiously flew through the air towards the fleeing Elder Gods and other cultivators.

The planet of Fogstone had been rocketing downwards towards the cultivators, but it was now completely surrounded by the endless black lotuses and unable to move any further.

“Be careful.”

“Seven formations, join forces together and do your best to hold!” The Starlord sent frantically.

“Hold!”

The seven thousand Elder Gods had transformed into an enormous protective circle, with Immortal Abyssus and Immortal Skyram having hidden themselves inside the circle. However, the valiant Starlord of Fogstone remained outside the circle, lashing out with his sword repeatedly as he attempted to chop apart as many black lotuses as he could.

However, there were simply too many lotuses.

“We won’t be able to escape. Once God Emperor Blacklotus returns, we’ll be doomed.”

“What should we do next?”

“How could the God Emperor be this powerful?”

All of them were frantic, Ning included. They weren’t capable of breaching past those black lotuses; there was no way they could make it back inside the planet of Fogstone.

“Second Uncle.” The Starlord was still wracked by grief and agony.

“If this continues, all of us are definitely going to die.” Ning was pondering his next steps. “Right now, we’re able to block the black lotuses because all seven formations are sharing the load together, but once God Emperor Blacklotus arrives and strikes out with his Eternal weapon, we won’t even be able to dodge. If his attack lands on me, my Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation will collapse.”

The seven formations weren’t truly as one. Given how strong the God Emperor was, it would be easy for him to break through the defenses of the formations one by one.

“I have no other options.” Ning frowned. Violetjewel was his most important possession, and treasures were incredibly important for any cultivator. Ning truly didn’t wish to loan Violetjewel out to someone else!

It was entirely possible that the Starlord would become greedy and not return it. As the leader of the entire Fogstone lineage, the lifeblood oath he had sworn was a very lax one.

As the leader of their organization, he had tremendous authority. He could find excuses to issue punishments to his subordinates, and so it was entirely possible for the Starlord to find a way to put Ning to death without running afoul of his lifeblood oath!

“I’ll have him swear another lifeblood oath of my choosing, then I’ll secretly lend him Violetjewel,” Ning mused. “That’s the only way to survive this.”

“But...there’s just one problem.”

“Spirit of the sword.” Ning immediately reached out to commune with the sword-spirit residing within Violetjewel.

“Master,” the sword-spirit said.

“If I was to allow the Starlord to bind Violetjewel for his own use, how long would it take?” Ning asked. Ning didn’t know much about Eternal weapons, but he had heard that binding them was actually quite difficult.

“According to what the old master told me all those years ago, Eternal weapons are quite hard to bind,” the sword-spirit said. “Normally speaking, anyone below the World level of power will not be able to bind Eternal weapons at all. The only reason why you were able to do so after a few centuries was because of the secret ‘Heartseep technique’ which Vastheaven Palace had access to.

“The Starlord is a World God. He can bind it. But...the quintessence core of an Eternal weapon contains some of the insights into the quintessence of a Dao from the original creator of that weapon. Thus, if you wish to fully master an Eternal weapon, you have to be approved of by the sword’s quintessence core itself,” the sword-spirit said.

Ning nodded.

Creating Chaos weapons and Dao weapons, by contrast, was much simpler. They didn’t have quintessence cores, just a few divine runes and

tattoos.

“For a World-level...it’ll take anywhere from four or five days to forever,” the sword-spirit said.

“Forever? You mean, he might never be able to bind it?” Ning was stunned.

“Right. The quintessence cores have their own personalities and will try to seek out masters that suit them. If a core is completely opposed to the person trying to bind it, there’ll be no way to succeed in binding it. However, both you and the Starlord are quite talented in the Dao of the Sword. He should be able to bind it,” the sword-spirit said. “And it should be fairly fast for the Starlord. He should be able to succeed in just a few days.”

Ning began to panic.

A few days?

That was far too much time. Given how furiously World God Blackmist was fighting, he would probably run out of energy in the time needed to boil a kettle of tea. A few days?

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“Let’s see how much longer you can hang on for.” God Emperor Blacklotus was quite relaxed as he used the giant crystal scimitar in his hands to chop towards World God Blackmist again and again.

World God Blackmist’s entire body had turned a stony gray color and emanated a dazzling white light. Clearly, he had gone all out.

“What should I do? What should I do?!” World God Blackmist was beginning to panic.

He had managed to stop God Emperor Blacklotus, yes. But God Emperor Blacklotus was also an incredibly talented Ki Refiner. This entire chaosworld had become completely filled with black lotuses, all of which were surrounding and suppressing the cultivators of the Fogstone Dominion, making it so that there was no way they could escape.

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“Eh?”

A crack suddenly appeared in the membrane protecting the chaosworld, and a barefoot, sloppy-looking old man dressed in tattered robes walked out from the crack, staring downwards with curiosity.

“What’s with all these black lotuses? Oho! An Eternal weapon? Isn’t that interesting.” The raggedy old man’s forehead creased as he smiled.

# Chapter 48: You Dared Attack One of Mine?

“I wasn’t too late. That young brother of mine hasn’t been killed yet.” The raggedy old man’s gaze pierced through all obstructions as he stared at the great battle being fought.

“Let’s go take a look.”

He sauntered forward through the air. Although his body touched some of the lotus flowers, they slid right through him as though his body was illusory, having no effect on him at all.

He looked as though he was walking quite slowly, but with each step he moved millions of kilometers.

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The battle was still continuing.

Ji Ning, the Starlord of Fogstone, Immortal Abyssus, and the others had been completely surrounded by the endless black lotuses. There was no way out whatsoever.

“I never would’ve thought that I’d end up dying here.” Immortal Abyssus let out a soft sigh. “For me to die is one thing, but my disciples...” Although some of the disciples remained behind on the planet of Fogstone, once the World-level experts died the planet of Fogstone would fall into the hands of God Emperor Blackstone. Not a single living being would be able to escape.

“How could this God Emperor Blacklotus be so strong?”

“My luck is horrid. I’ve been in seclusion for so many years, and the very first time I leave it to take part in a fight, I end up running into someone as frightening as him.”

“I know. His insights into the Dao are profound, his forbidden secret arts are incredibly powerful, and he even has an Eternal weapon! Even when I roamed about the primordial chaos, I almost never encountered people as

terrifying as him.”

The various World-level experts could do nothing but sigh. Their hearts were filled with resentment and an unwillingness to give up, but they could read the situation. Whether they lived or died was now completely up to God Emperor Blacklotus.

“Second Uncle.” The Starlord lowered his head and saw World God Blackmist continuing to furiously fight back against World God Blackmist. Tears appeared in the Starlord’s eyes. “Second Uncle, forget it. Forget it. We’ve lost.”

The fourth stage of the [Fogstone Apocalypse] was indeed terrifyingly powerful, but it used up divine power at an even more terrifying rate. Soon, the very last bit of Blackmist’s divine power would be used up.

“Ahahaha...Blackmist, I have to say that even I admire your tenacity. To show my respect for you, I’ll allow all of these World Gods and Chaos Immortals to join you in death.” The God Emperor’s mocking voice rang out in the skies. “After all of you die, I’ll come up with some other ideas for acquiring your divine abilities and techniques from within the planet of Fogstone.”

“There’s no way you’ll succeed,” World God Blackmist growled, his eyes filled with savagery and pain.

He wasn’t afraid of death.

What he feared was dying while failing to protect the Starlord.

“If I succeed, I’ll be happy. If I don’t, it won’t make much of a difference. Blackmist, I’m curious as to how long your divine power will be able to hold out.” God Emperor Blacklotus was quite relaxed. He held the absolute upper hand and was launching attacks with impunity. “You can fight for as long as you wish, but in the end the result will still be death.”

World God Blackmist’s eyes were filled with resentment.

He was continuing to fight, only because he truly wasn’t willing to give up.



Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Suddenly, a series of echoing booms began to ring out in the heavens.

Serpent-shaped streaks of lightning began to cascade down from the heavens. It looked as though trillions of lightning chains had manifested, wantonly crashing downwards against the earth. The countless black lotuses were all wiped out, and even some of the black lotuses that weren't directly struck by the lightning bolts saw sparks of lightning crackle around them, wiping them out.

One moment ago, the entire world was filled with countless black lotuses. Now...they had all vanished. The mountains, the skies, the seas... the mighty divine runes that filled this world had all been shattered as well.

“What...”

“What just happened?”

The seven thousand Elder Gods that had been struggling to defend were all stunned. The Starlord, Immortal Abyssus...all of them were stunned.

Vanished?

The countless black lotuses which they had been struggling to push back had all just...vanished?

“Impossible. That’s impossible.” God Emperor Blacklotus blanched. He no longer paid any attention to World God Blackmist as he frantically scanned the world around him. He knew exactly how strong this forbidden art of his was, because he had to prepare it in advance by filling the entire chaosworld with many formations.

When all of the formations were unleashed, they were almost comparable to his full power when he used his Eternal weapon.

A forbidden art of such power had been instantly defeated? By lightning? Who could do such a thing?!

“Uh...so did you guys think the lightning looked really pretty?” A voice suddenly rang out by the ears of the Ji Ning, the Starlord, God Emperor

Blacklotus, and all the other cultivators.

A barefoot old man dressed in tattered robes walked towards through the air from afar, the trillions of lightning bolts parting before his path.

“I really like lightning, you know.”

“Unfortunately, I don’t have much talent for it. I lived in the Grand Lightning Sea for ages, but in the end I was still able to master just one stage of its lightning. It is pretty weak, but its not bad when you just want to mess around.” The raggedy old man beamed as he spoke, then waved his hand, causing the trillions of lightning bolts to vanish from the heavens.

The battle between the two sides had come to a complete halt.

The Fogstone Dominion’s major powers were filled with excitement, believing that perhaps they might be able to survive after all.

God Emperor Blacklotus began to worry.

“Greetings, senior.” Immortal Abyssus was the first to react.

“Greetings, senior.” All of the cultivators of the Fogstone Dominion bowed respectfully, including World God Blackmist.

“Greetings, senior.” God Emperor Blacklotus and the World-level experts on his side, as well as all of the Elder Gods, also bowed respectfully.

None of them were fools. What they had witnessed just now spoke volumes. This person had easily, casually wiped out God Emperor Blacklotus’ terrifying forbidden art. Most likely, only someone on a completely different level of power could accomplish this...a Samsara Daolord!

According to the stories, Samsara Daolords walked at the borders between life and death. Each time they traversed this samsara cycle of life and death, they would grow dramatically more powerful. If they failed... then they would die.

Every single one of them was inconceivably powerful.

There were legends of monstrous Elder Gods who could slay World-level

experts! However, even the most monstrous of World-level experts would only at most be capable of dealing with newly ascended Samsara Daolords. Any Samsara Daolord who had been alive for just a bit of time had the power to utterly crush any World-level expert, and the longer they stayed alive the more powerful they became. According to the legends, an enraged Samsara Daolord who was about to die might wipe out entire territories in their death throes!

And those legends were true!

Only those who had actually encountered a Daolord would understand how terrifying they were.

“Mm.” The raggedy old man swept the Fogstone Dominion’s experts with his gaze, revealing a smile.

The experts of Fogstone all felt a surge of joy.

The experts of the Blacklotus Empire all felt their hearts tremble.

“You actually dared to attack one of mine.” The raggedy old man looked towards God Emperor Blacklotus, a smile still on his face. “You really are quite bold.”

God Emperor Blacklotus quivered, his body turning soft.

He had experienced many things while roaming through foreign territories, and he had encountered quite a few Samsara Daolords. He knew exactly how terrifying a Samsara Daolord could be.

“Great!”

“It looks like he’s on our side.”

“Didn’t you hear the Daolord say ‘one of mine’ just now? Does he belong to us? Starlord, could he possibly be one of the ancient seniors of the Fogstone lineage?” Every member of Fogstone was jubilant, and Ning let out a sigh of relief as well.

The Starlord was also puzzled. He sent back, “I don’t know. Fogstone does have quite a few ancient cultivators who are roaming the outside world. It is possible that one of them broke through to become a Samsara

Daolord, I suppose...but I don't recognize this man."

"Blackmist, do you recognize him?"

"I don't recognize this senior either." World God Blackmist flew towards them, his skin still that grayish-white color. "If he's a Samsara Daolord, he must have been training for an extremely long period of time. He probably left Fogstone long before I even started to cultivate. It's also possible that he's completely unrelated to Fogstone."

Fogstone's experts were musing over who this Daolord was, while the experts of the Blacklotus Empire were filled with terror upon realizing that he was an enemy.

"You attacked one of mine, so...I have to kill you." The raggedy old man continued to smile in a jolly fashion, but his words were utterly terrifying. He waved his finger, causing an enormous illusory finger of lightning to shoot out towards God Emperor Blacklotus.

"My master is Daolord Seven Sovereigns!" God Emperor Blacklotus had a look on his face as he screamed, "Daolord Seven Sovereigns is my master!"

God Emperor Blacklotus wanted to flee, but spacetime was sealed off in this area. He had nowhere to run or hide.

The finger of lightning tapped him on his body.

Whoosh! One moment, a look of terror was on God Emperor Blacklotus' face. The next moment, he had been completely transformed into dust.

The entire world was silent.

Ning and the others hadn't even had the chance to digest the fact that Blacklotus was a disciple of this 'Daolord Seven Sovereigns' before Blacklotus died.

"Seven Sovereigns?" The raggedy old man spat. "Seven SOVEREIGNS? More like seven bugs! He hides from me like a bug. This old man wanted to kill him before my Daomerge, but he actually abandoned his home and went scurrying off to some godforsaken place."

# Chapter 49: The Daolord's Brother

After killing God Emperor Blacklotus the raggedy old man waved his hand, collecting the treasures which Blacklotus had left behind. He singled out the giant crystal scimitar in particular, picking it up and giving it a close look. He mumbled to himself, "Huh, this Eternal weapon isn't bad." Watched by all of the cultivators, the old man put the scimitar away.

The raggedy old man wasn't the slightest bit self-conscious about looting Blacklotus' items.

"He's crazy powerful."

"He squashed God Emperor Blacklotus like a bug."

"Didn't you hear? This senior even wishes to kill that 'Daolord Seven Sovereigns'." The cultivators of Fogstone felt their hearts shudder as they contemplated this. Samsara Daolords were figures that vastly surpassed them in power. However, their innate fear didn't prevent them from also feeling gratitude and veneration towards this raggedy old man who they had just met for the first time. They all hoped that one day they might also reach his level.

The entire purpose of cultivation was to go out and see more things and experience greater things, to possess more formidable techniques and divine abilities.

"Let's go down," the Starlord sent.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh.

Thousands of figures descended from the skies. Now that nothing was around to interfere with their movements, they moved quite quickly as they descended upon the enormous nine-petal black lotus which was now bereft of all buildings. A day ago, this black lotus was a city. After being activated as a treasure, some of the buildings that lay atop it had been put away while the rest had been crushed into dust.

"Greetings, senior." The Starlord stepped forward and bowed. "Thank you for saving us, senior."

“Thank you for saving us, senior.” The thousands of cultivators behind him all bowed as well.

As for the surviving Elder Gods and World-level cultivators of the Blacklotus Empire, all of them were feeling rather uneasy. They didn’t even dare to try and flee, nor did they dare to go forward and speak to the Daolord. They were afraid that he’d wave his finger at them and kill them all.

“Senior.” The man dressed in white floral robes gritted his teeth, then said respectfully, “We have nothing to do with this matter. The Starlord came here to take revenge on Chaos Immortal Owlsoar, who is now already dead. We were just defending ourselves and were the weaker side until the God Emperor revealed his true power in an attempt to wipe out the Fogstone lineage...but that was him, not us. We just stayed on the sidelines and didn’t get involved at all.”

“Right right right! We didn’t get involved at all, nor were we strong enough to get involved.”

“Please show mercy, senior.”

The four remaining World-level experts and the Elder Gods all waited nervously.

The raggedy old man waved his hand dismissively. “Beat it, beat it! All of you, beat it.”

The survivors of the Blacklotus Empire were stunned for a moment, then revealed looks of joy.

“Thank you, senior.”

First, they bowed respectfully. And then...swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! All of them flew into the skies and departed. The Starlord didn’t dare to stop them; he even withdrew the astral light that had been emanating from the planet of Fogstone. If the Daolord had granted them permission to leave, how could he possibly dare to stop them?

After waving the survivors off, the raggedy old man turned to smile at the cultivators of the Fogstone Dominion who were standing closest to

him.

“He’s looking at us.”

“He’s staring at us.”

“He’s smiling!”

“So what if he’s smiling? He smiled when he wiped out God Emperor Blacklotus with a finger, didn’t he?”

“What are you talking about? The Daolord already said that he was on our side.”

“We have no idea who he is. He might be an ancient member of Fogstone who left long ago but made a breakthrough to become a Daolord.” Everyone present was secretly speculating, but they all knew that actually breaking through from the World level to become a Samsara Daolord was incredibly difficult. The Fogstone lineage was an ancient one, but it had only produced a fairly small number of World-level experts. For it to give birth to a Samsara Daolord was extremely unlikely, unless one of them had a stroke of absolutely tremendous luck.

The raggedy old man walked towards them.

The Starlord and the others all bowed respectfully while secretly feeling eager to find out exactly who this old man was.

“Mm.” The raggedy old man glanced at them, then turned his gaze to...Ji Ning.

“The Fogstone lineage, eh?” The raggedy old man nodded slowly, turning his gaze back to the Starlord. “Fogstone deserves to be thanked for its efforts in taking care of this young brother of mine.”

“Young brother?” The Starlord and the others were all stunned.

Ning was also stunned.

Brother?

The raggedy old man winked at Ning, then sent mentally, “What is your name? Who gave you the talisman of welcome?”

Ning immediately understood.

Talisman of welcome?

The Vastheaven Palace's talisman of welcome? This was a talisman which World God Northrest had prepared for his heir before he died. Every single formal member of Vastheaven Palace was given a single opportunity to welcome and recruit a new member into their ranks. Anyone welcomed in such a manner would be allowed to enter Vastheaven Palace with no need for any testing. Thus, the formal members of Vastheaven Palace wouldn't casually bestow their talisman of welcome to others. They were generally extremely exacting in their standards, and some of them would never use the talisman a single time in their entire lives.

"My Daoist title is Darknorth, while my personal name is Ji Ning. This talisman of welcome was given to me by World God Northrest," Ning sent mentally.

"Northrest?" The raggedy old man blinked, then the look in his eye changed. "Do you know how he died?" Vastheaven Palace had known of Northrest's passing in the moment of his death. It had investigated the cause of his death but had been unable to discover anything.

"Yes." Ning nodded.

"Let's chat about that in a bit. Also, there's no need for you to stay here on Fogstone any longer. Return to Vastheaven Palace with me," the raggedy old man said. "Vastheaven Palace is much more powerful."

"Understood," Ning said.

The lifeblood oath he had sworn to Fogstone had been a fairly loose one, as Ning was planning all along to spend the next chaos cycle searching for Vastheaven Palace. In addition, since this raggedy old man was able to immediately recognize that Ning had a talisman of welcome, he was most likely a member of Vastheaven Palace as well. In fact, it was entirely possible that he was one of their highest ranking members! Only a fool would refuse to join such a powerful organization.



World God Northrest himself had claimed that countless cultivators dreamed of having the chance to join Vastheaven Palace.

“Who is Darknorth to you, senior?” The Starlord and the others were all stunned.

“He’s my friend and brother.” The raggedy old man nodded. “I’m going to take him back with me now. You won’t stop me, right?”

“Of course not!” The Starlord hurriedly nodded. “Darknorth just joined us a short while ago. He was quite powerful when he joined us, and so the lifeblood oath he had to swear was a fairly lax one. He’s absolutely permitted to leave.”

Immortal Abyssus and the others all looked towards Ning as well, a look of envy in their eyes.

Good heavens.

A Samsara Daolord was addressing him as ‘brother’? Who wouldn’t want to be in his place?! They’d even be willing to be the Daolord’s retainer, to say nothing of being his brother. However, Samsara Daolords had extremely high standards. They wouldn’t just casually accept anyone as their retainer.

“There IS one thing.” The Starlord gritted his teeth. “I’d like to ask you to help me, senior.” Although he was afraid of angering this Daolord, he still forced the words out.

“What is it?” The raggedy old man smiled cheerily at him.

“Childstar!” The nearby World God Blackmist sent a furious mental message, terrified that Starlord was going to anger this powerful old man.

The Starlord lowered his head, then said respectfully, “My second uncle used an incomplete divine technique which is causing his entire body to transform into fogstone. We aren’t able to stop or reverse the process. I hope that you can intervene to rescue my second uncle, senior.”

“Oh?” The raggedy old man walked forward towards Blackmist. “This is your second uncle? Yes, he really is completely transforming into fogstone.

Hmm. Don't resist. Let me take a look."

The raggedy old man extended a hand, pressing it against World God Blackmist's shoulders and carefully extending his senses.

"Uh...what the hell type of divine ability is this? How unique. It is actually causing even his truesoul to transform into fogstone. If this continues, he's going to transform into a hunk of rock." As the raggedy old man extended his senses, he continued to mumble to himself. "But this divine ability really is quite powerful. It actually allows for one's divine power to explode to such a level of might...quite impressive."

"Unfortunately, you are using an incomplete version of this divine ability, resulting in your truesoul being petrified. There's no way to reverse it. Even if you were to suddenly gain the complete, correct version right now, you still wouldn't be able to stop it." The raggedy old man let out a sigh. "His truesoul is undergoing an irreversible transformation. When the process is completed, he'll lose all life and become a hunk of rock."

"Is there nothing you can do?" The Starlord revealed a look of desperation.

"He won't be able to hold for much longer. Less than the time needed to boil a kettle of tea." The raggedy old man shook his head.

"Second Uncle." The Starlord gripped World God Blackmist's hands, his eyes reddening.

"Don't be sad, Childstar. Quite a few of the elders and ancients of the Fogstone lineage have been forced to use the fourth stage, and all of them died in the grips of despair..." World God Blackmist looked fondly at the Starlord, almost as if he was looking at his own son. "I, however, will be dying happily. You are alive! I've lived for long enough. Eternity isn't for everyone."

"I understand." The Starlord nodded, but he was still filled with pain.

Slowly, World God Blackmist's skin turned grayer and grayer. Earlier, there was at least a tinge of pinkish flesh to his coloration, but now his aura grew dimmer and dimmer. And yet, a smile remained on his face.

Finally...

His aura was completely extinguished.

World God Blackmist had completely transformed into a statue. However, his gaze remained gentle and calm, as though he was forever looking at a beloved child.

“Second Uncle.” The Starlord shuddered, wracked by agony.

“Brother Blackmist.” Immortal Abyssus and the others all sighed and bowed slightly.

Ning bowed respectfully as well. He felt great gratitude towards World God Blackmist, who had treated him better than anyone else on Fogstone. Blackmist had even taught him sword-arts with care. Although Blackmist’s sword-arts weren’t particularly formidable, he had truly been very diligent in guiding Ning, going so far as to allow Ning to inspect the sword-arts he himself had come up with.

Thud. Thud. Thud. The Starlord fell to his knees, kowtowing heavily as his tears stained the ground before him.

The statue didn’t move. It just stood there, continuing to stare at him with gentle warmth.

“Let’s go, let’s go. I hate seeing stuff like this happen. Ugh.” The raggedy old man shook his head and sighed. “There’s nothing I can do. His truesoul was transformed into fogstone. Let’s go, Ji Ning. Let’s go.”

“Right.” Ning nodded.

“Everyone...” Ning looked at the World-level experts and Elder Gods.

Everyone nodded.

Since the Starlord was still kneeling before the statue in grief, it wasn’t appropriate for them to chat too much with Ning. Their gazes said everything that needed saying.

“Let’s go.” The raggedy elder stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Ning as they both soared into the skies and disappeared.

As Ning flew away, he turned his head to look backwards, once.

He saw the Starlord on his knees, as well as the gently smiling statue of World God Blackmist.

“Fogstone...” Ning knew that he would never, ever be able to forget this place, his first home in the Badlands Territory.

# Credits

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